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ABSTRACT

The proceedings of a conference on Asian Americans held in New York City in May 1978 are summarized in this report. The conference consisted of workshops on four issues: employment, voter participation, youth, and the elderly. In the workshop on employment, issues discussed included the participation of Asians in the health system and in the public (Federal, State and local) sector. In the workshop on voter participation, discussion centered around problems of voter registration, voter education, and redistricting as they affect Asian Americans in New York City. Also considered were ways that the Voting Rights Act of 1965 can be used to increase the participation of Asian Americans with limited English speaking ability. Principle issues covered in the workshop on youth were the lack of statistics on Asian American young people, language and educational problems, youth programs and employment, and gangs and violence, particularly in New York City's Chinatown. In the workshop on the elderly Asian American population of New York City, the availability of census statistics, language and cultural problems, social isolation, health, limited income, and housing were among the areas discussed. For each workshop, relevant statistical information is presented. Recommendations of the conference participants for eliminating discrimination and inequalities are also given. (GC)

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Asian Americans: An Agenda for Action

A CONFERENCE SUMMARY

February 1980

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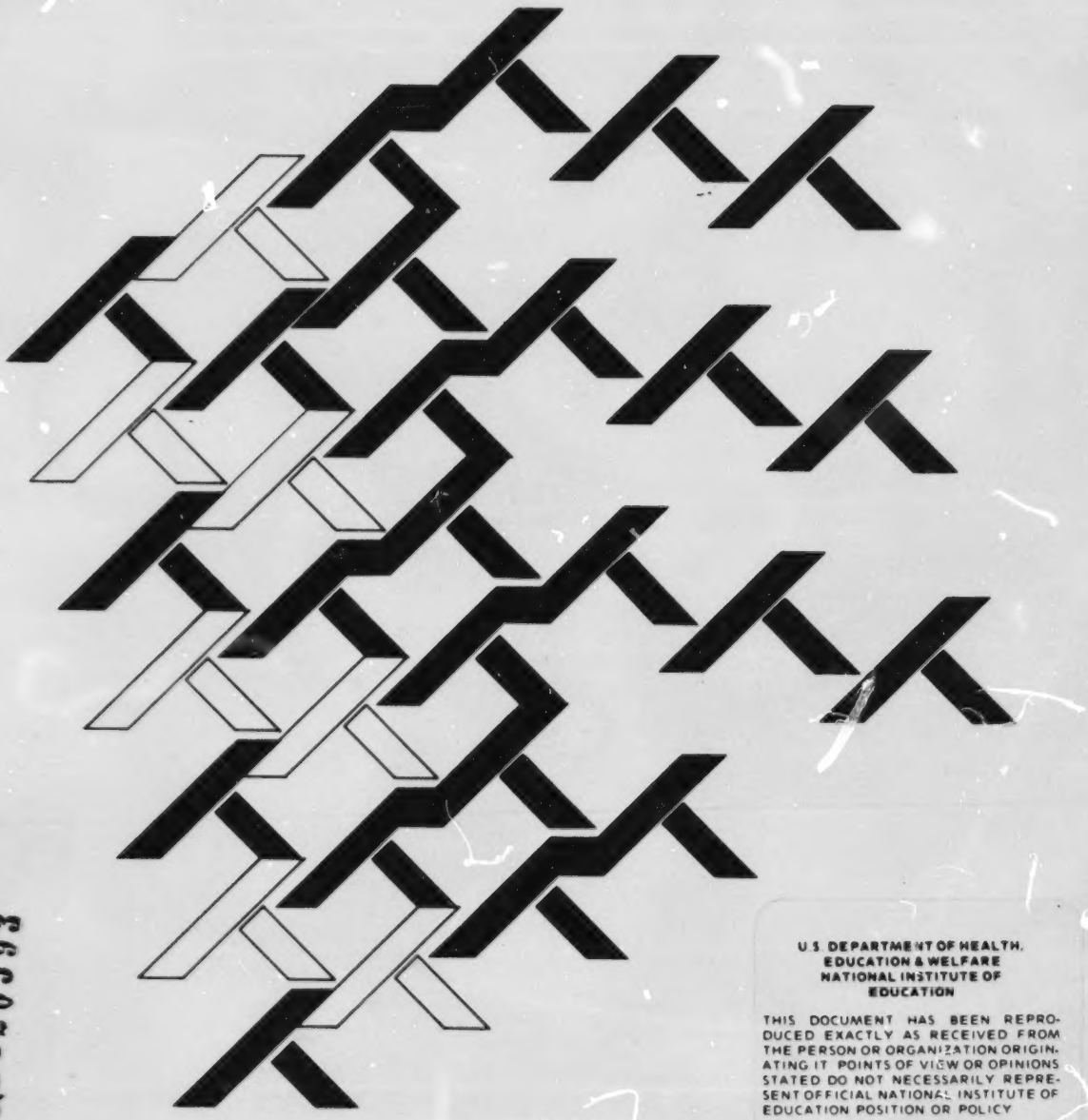

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Asian Americans: An Agenda for Action

A CONFERENCE SUMMARY

—A summary report prepared by the New York State Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights.

ATTRIBUTION:

The findings and recommendations contained in this report are those of the conference participants, not necessarily of the New York State Advisory Committee or the United States Commission on Civil Rights. This summary report has been prepared by the New York State Advisory Committee for submission to and consideration by the United States Commission on Civil Rights.

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

New York State Advisory Committee
To the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights
February 1980

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Frankie M. Freeman
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Louis Nuñez, *Staff Director*

Sirs and Madam:

The New York State Advisory Committee submits this report, *Asian Americans: An Agenda for Action,* as part of its responsibility to advise the Commission on relevant civil rights problems within the State.

This document summarizes the proceedings of a conference sponsored by the Advisory Committee on May 6, 1978, in New York City. Designed as a followup to an informal public hearing held by the Advisory Committee in July 1974, the conference consisted of workshops on four issues: employment, voter participation, youth, and the elderly. It was attended by more than 400 persons, including representatives of Asian American groups in New York City and public and private social service agencies serving those groups.

Among the findings of the conference participants were the following: Asian Americans in New York City continue to be victims of discrimination and receive disparate treatment from both public and private organizations; they are underrepresented both as participants in and as members of boards and commissions of social service programs; Asian Americans are denied equal employment opportunity in many occupational areas; Federal, State, and local governments fail to provide adequate services to Asian Americans and do not collect adequate data on the problems of Asian Americans; and many Asian Americans, because of their relatively small numbers, do not receive needed assistance under the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

The Advisory Committee approved the conference summary and concluded that the information was so compelling that it should be presented to the public in a published summary.

We urge that the Commission support the recommendations made by the conference participants. It is our hope that these recommendations will be implemented by the appropriate public and private agencies.

Sincerely,

Franklin H. Williams
Chairperson

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Manhattan

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Brooklyn

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The staff of the Publications Support Center was responsible for final preparation of the document for publication.

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Introduction

"Asian Americans: An Agenda for Action" was a public forum on proposals for change sponsored by the New York State Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. The forum was convened at Murry Bergtraum High School in Chinatown, New York City, on May 6, 1978, and was attended by about 400 representatives from various government agencies and the Asian American community of the city. The 1-day conference was called as a followup to the informal public hearing held 4 years earlier in New York City by the State Advisory Committee to collect information on the subject of "Equal Opportunity for Asian Americans in the New York Metropolitan Area."

In the 1974 informal public hearing, testimony was obtained from selected representatives of the Chinese, Japanese, Pilipino, and Korean communities of New York City. Information was gathered regarding population, socioeconomic status, and a general overview of the situation of these ethnic groups in the city. In addition, details about specific problems faced by Asian Americans in the areas of immigration, employment, and stereotyping in the media were also collected. Asian American community representatives protested the lack of equal opportunity afforded to them in public and private employment and in job training and other social service programs.[1]

At the opening session of the 1974 informal hearing, the Honorable Franklin H. Williams, Chairperson of the New York State Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, stated:

> There has never been a hearing on this subject in New York City held by a Federal, State, or city agency. In fact, to our discredit as a Nation, State, and city the problems faced daily by Asian Americans at almost every point of contact with our predominantly Caucasian society are virtually ignored by most American institutions. We hope at this hearing to initiate a process that will go a long way toward correcting this disgraceful oversight.[2]

The Asian American conference of 1978 was called to assess how effective the 1974 informal public hearing was and how far Asian Americans had advanced in their efforts to attain equal opportunity, as well as to plan specific courses of action in order to give more direction and purpose to their activities. In the words of Jacques Wilmore, then Director of the Eastern Regional Office of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, it was a time "not for talk but for developing an agenda for action and a timetable for implementing that agenda."

In her keynote address, the Honorable Patsy Takemoto Mink, a six-term Congresswoman from Hawaii and the former Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, noted that political action is what will propel Asian Americans to that "new era." Ms. Mink stressed the importance of voter participation in attaining the goals and objectives of the conference. Without voter participation, "it's going to be a long, agonizing, and frustrating activity because your words will fall on deaf ears," she said. She urged the conference participants to go beyond

[1] New York State Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *The Forgotten Minority: Asian Americans in New York City* (November 1977).

[2] New York State Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Transcript of Public Hearing, June 12–14, 1974, New York City, N.Y., available in the Commission's Eastern Regional Office.

voter registration activities to a "total commitment." The former Congresswoman encouraged the participants to actively seek candidates who will be committed to the Asian cause and then to throw their full support behind these candidates. She also reminded them of the need to create an independent, grassroots, Asian American political organization to get the Asian Americans' message across to the candidates and obtain their commitments. Ms. Mink also called on the group to organize a talent bank of candidates to recommend to those persons who have the power to make appointments to boards and commissions at all levels of government.

According to Charles Wang, co-chairperson of the Asian American Subcommittee of the New York State Advisory Committee, the purpose of the conference was:

> to look at some critical areas of concern to Asian Americans of New York today; to see that the elderly are well taken care of; that the young have equal educational opportunity; that there is full employment for Asian Americans; that there is a voice in all branches of government through Asian American representation; and to formulate action plans that will lead Asian Americans to a new era.

The conference offered four concurrent workshops on subjects designated by a conference planning committee of Asian American organizations and agencies: youth, elderly, employment, and voter participation. Conveners and panelists for each workshop were taken from a cross section of the Asian American community. Although the information was presented by persons with expertise in the subjects they discussed, their material has not been otherwise verified. Resource persons included representatives from the Social Security Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation, New York City Human Resources Administration, New York City Administration on Aging in the Office of the Mayor of New York City, Center for Bilingual Education of the New York City Board of Education, several Democratic and Republican County Committees of New York, and the League of Women Voters.

This report includes a brief description of the size and distribution of New York City's Asian American population, a summary of the information presented at the conference, and the findings, as well as recommendations, of the participants. Although the findings and recommendations do not necessarily represent the views of the Advisory Committee or the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, for the most part they are consistent with public positions taken by the Advisory Committee.

MINORITIES
UNITE!
FIGHT FOR
DEMOCRATIC
RIGHTS!
反對種族歧視
無人不欺
支持姚寧徹底
爭取勝利

Chapter 1

Asian Americans in New York City

In 1970 the U.S. Census Bureau counted 99,184 Asian Americans in New York City.[1] At that time, Asian Americans comprised 1.2 percent of the city's total population of 7,894,862. From 1971 to 1974, an additional 29,481 Asian Americans came to New York City to live, according to statistics from the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service. This brought the number of Asian Americans in the city to approximately 128,665, not counting the temporary residents, i.e., tourists, students, business people, temporary workers, and persons working for the United Nations or for foreign missions. By 1976 the number of Asian Americans in New York City increased to a census estimate of 144,869. Between 1970 and 1974, the Asian American population increased 30 percent, and by 1976, 46 percent. In contrast, the city's total population has been in continuous decline from 7,894,862 in 1970 to 7,577,600 in 1974, down to 7,415,600 in 1976. As a result, the proportion of Asian Americans in the total population has increased from 1.2 percent in 1970 to 1.7 percent in 1974 and 2.0 percent in 1976. (See table 1.1.)

The 1970 census had an estimated net underenumeration of 2.5 percent for the total population of the country. However, the underenumeration was not distributed evenly across all population groups. For the white population, it was 1.9 percent. For blacks and other races, it was 6.9 percent (blacks alone had a 7.7 percent underenumeration).[2] Although estimates of underenumeration have not been compiled separately for Asian Americans, it is likely that the undercount rate for Asian Americans is higher than 7 percent due to the fact that many persons from Asian countries have been classified by the Census Bureau as "Others" and not as "Asians."

The U.S. Census Bureau not only undercounted Asian Americans, it also published little socioeconomic data on them. Of the many reports published on the 1970 census of population and housing, only two of the Bureau's subject reports are particularly useful for Asian Americans.[3] Other publications based on census data are available, however. These include Urban Associates, Inc., *A Study of Selected Socio-Economic Characteristics of Ethnic Minorities*,[4] the Pacific/Asian Elderly Research Project's *Census and Baseline Data: A Detailed Report*,[5] and Betty Lee Sung's *Chinese Americans: Manpower and Employment*.[6]

New York City's Asian American population is largely foreign born (see table 1.2) and dispersed throughout the five boroughs. Although Asians are

[1] In terms of census data, Asian Americans include only Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, and Pilipinos because these were the only Asians separately identified in the census questionnaire.

[2] U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Estimates of Coverage of Population by Sex, Race and Age: Demographic Analysis*, PHC(e)-4p.

[3] U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1970 Census of Population, *Japanese, Chinese, and Filipinos in the United States Subject Report*, PC(2)-1G, and *Housing of Selected Racial Groups*, HC(7)-9.

[4] U.S., Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, *A Study of Selected Socio-Economic Characteristics*, by Urban Associates based on the 1970 census (July 1974). Urban Associates, Inc., is now known as R.J. Associates, Inc.

[5] U.S., Administration on Aging, *Census and Baseline Data: A Detailed Report*, by Pacific/Asian Elderly Research Project (August 1977). This report is one of a series entitled "Understanding the Pacific/Asian Elderly."

[6] U.S., Department of Labor, Manpower Administration (renamed the Employment and Training Administration in November 1975), *Chinese American Manpower and Employment*, by Betty Lee Sung (September 1975).

TABLE 1.1

Asian American Population of New York City, 1970-76

	1970 Census	Number of immigrants indicating New York as permanent residence 1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976
Chinese	69,324	2,938	4,190	4,129	3,810	5,233	4,102
Japanese	13,968	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	348	N.A.	N.A.
Korean	4,685	1,202	1,937	1,660	1,613	1,472	1,568
Pilipino	11,207	1,750	1,939	2,057	1,908	1,881	1 948
Total	99,184	5,890	8,066	7,846	7,679	8,586	7,618
Cum. total	99,184	105,074	113,140	120,986	128,665	137,251	144,869
	1970 Census	Population estimates: 1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976
Total population All races	7,894,862	7,886,500	7,823,800	7,664,400	7,577,600	7 472,500	7,415,600
Percent Asian Americans in total population	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.6	1.7	1.8	2.0

Percent change	Total population	Asian Americans
1970-74	-4.0	+29.7
1970-76	-6.1	+46.1
1974-76	-2.1	+12.6

N.A.= not available

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1970 Census of Population, vol. 1, Characteristics of the Population, New York, Table 23, and U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service Annual Reports, 1971-76.

TABLE 1.2

Nativity of Asian Americans in New York State and New York City, 1970

	New York State			New York City		
	Total	Foreign born	Percent of total	Total	Foreign born	Percent of total
Chinese	66,407	42,425	64	56,217	37,348	66
Japanese	17,304	10,784	62	11,007	7,843	71
Korean	5,777	3,965	69	3,654	2,665	73
Pilipino	16,262	10,264	63	12,046	8,275	69
Total	105,750	67,648	64	82,924	56,131	68

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1970 Census of Population and Housing, Detailed Characteristics, New York, PC(1)-D, table 141.

most visible in Chinatown, there are sizable concentrations in other sections of the city, most notably in Manhattan's Upper West Side and in Elmhurst and Flushing in Queens. (See table 1.3.) This dispersion has contributed to the difficulty in addressing the many problems that confront Asians in New York City. Furthermore, the Census Bureau's subject report on Japanese, Chinese, and Pilipinos does not give the level of information necessary to meet the needs of the various Asian American communities such as neighborhood characteristics. Conference participants charged that as a result governmental programs lack understanding of, sensitivity, and outreach to the Asian American communities.

In a statement prepared for this conference, Frank P. Mangino, at the time acting chairperson of the New York City Commission on Human Rights, said:

> While some studies have been made on Chinese Americans and the Chinatown community, there is almost no material available on other Asian groups in the city, leaving us at a loss as to how we can assist them in obtaining the full measure of benefits available to all New York residents.

Considerable data on Asian Americans in New York City were collected in 1970, including published reports on basic information on Chinese, Japanese, and Pilipinos as shown in table 1.4. However, little information is available on Koreans and almost nothing on other Asian subgroups. What little information that is available does not adequately serve as baseline data for planning, outreach, and service delivery programs, conference participants said. For instance, although there is general information on income level for some groups (see table 1.4), a breakdown for individual subgroups by age, occupation, and residential neighborhood is missing.

Further, those data that are collected do not follow uniform criteria. Professor Frederico Macaranas, a Pilipino economist, decried the ambiguity suffered by Asian Americans in statistical classifications. He noted the failure of Federal agencies to coordinate their definitions of racial and ethnic categories in the collecting and reporting of data. "Such ambiguities result in the exclusion of Asian Americans from various government services and resources," he said.

Four years after the Advisory Committee's informal public hearing, the concern in New York City's Asian American community for recognition and equal opportunity was as strong as ever. Their growing impatience and the maturation of their political consciousness prompted the Advisory Committee to call the May conference.

TABLE 1.3

Selected Community Planning Districts with Concentrations of Asian Americans, 1970

County/CPD	Description	Total population	Tot. Asian population	Percent Asian	Chinese	Japanese	Korean	Pilipino
Bronx								
5	Fordham Hgts., Morris Hgts., University Hgts.	133,958	1,358	1.0	901	151	117	139
14	Riverdale	65,717	1,866	2.8	502	1,209	111	44
Brooklyn								
6	So. Brooklyn, Park Slope, Carroll Gardens, Brooklyn Hgts., Cobble Hill, Windsor Terrace	201,693	2,265	1.1	1,449	187	122	507
8	Crown Hgts, Prospect Hgts.	213,261	2,065	1.0	1,446	99	96	424
14	Flatbush, Midway, Ocean Parkway	197,877	2,604	1.3	2,088	171	86	259
Staten Island								
2	Dongan Hills, New Dorp, New Springfield, Richmond Town, So. Beach, Todd Hill, Willowbrook	80,339	644	0.8	215	119	58	252
3	Annandale, Fresh Kills, Great Kills, Tottenville	102,211	447	0.5	170	88	29	160

TABLE 1.3 (continued)
Selected Community Planning Districts with Concentrations of Asian Americans, 1970 (continued)

County/CPD	Description	Total population	Tot. Asian population	Percent Asian	Chinese	Japanese	Korean	Pilipino
Manahattan								
2	Little Italy, Soho, Noho, West Village, Greenwich Village	84,357	6,191	7.3	5,745	287	64	95
3	Chinatown, East Village, Lower East Side, Two Bridges	182,171	24,210	13.3	23,627	268	65	250
6	Grammercy, Tudor City, Sutton Place	121,893	2,315	1.9	1,085	439	74	717
7	Lincoln Sq., West Side, Upper West Side	212,316	4,110	1.9	2,029	1,323	289	469
9	Hamilton Hgts., Manhattanville, Morningside Hgts.	112,964	2,611	2.3	1,697	450	171	293
Queens								
3	E. Elmhurst, Jackson Hgts., N. Corona	123,596	2,104	1.7	1,557	268	110	169
4	Corona, Elmhurst, N. Corona	107,967	4,222	3.9	2,077	966	392	787
7	Flushing, Whitestone, Kissina Park, E. Flushing, College Pt.,	211,447	4,700	2.2	2,095	1,733	351	521
8	Jamaica Estates, Kew Gardens, Fresh Meadows, Holliswood, Briarwood, Utopia	119,093	2,269	1.9	1,119	830	113	207

Source: New York City Planning Department document submitted to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Eastern Regional Office, October 1978.

TABLE 1.4
Selected Characteristics of Chinese, Japanese, Koreans and Pilipinos in New York City, 1970

	Percent general population	Percent Chinese	Percent Pilipinc	Percent Japanese	Percent Korean
Labor force					
Male	74.1	70.9	83.1	76.3	79.0
Female	42.2	50.5	61.0	40.4	41.0
Unemployed					
Male	3.9	2.5	4.7	2.5	n.a.
Female	4.6	2.9	3.2	4.6	n.a.
Poverty					
Men w/incomes less than $4000	N.A.	47.0	39.0	35.0	24.0
Women w/incomes less than $4000	N.A.	61.0	47.0	65.0	46.0
Familes w/incomes less than $4000	15.6	16.0	16.1	16.0	N.A.
Familes below Federal poverty level	11.5	15.0	11.0	11.0	N.A.
Familes on public assistance	9.7	3.4	3.1	2.9	N.A.
Familes on social security	20.9	14.0	11.0	20.0	N.A.
Persons 65 years and over below poverty level	17.7	31.0	24.0	26.0	N.A.

Source: Urban Associates, Inc., *A Study of Selected Socio-Economic Characteristics* (July 1974), and U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1970 Census of Population and Housing.

SENIOR
COALITION CTR
华埠老人联合中心
還我們應有的權益来！
WE PAID TAXES BUT
WHERE ARE OUR RIGHTS

Chapter 2

The Elderly

The 1974 informal public hearing on equal opportunity for Asian Americans indicated that serious problems existed for the elderly Asian American population of New York City. A member of the Chinese community declared that 43 percent of the elderly Chinese immigrants worked full time and that 20 percent of them worked more than 57 hours a week. Comparable statistics were not available for the Japanese, Pilipino, and Korean communities, but their spokespersons asserted that many of their elderly were also poor and living on limited incomes and that they needed medical care and other social services.[1]

The 1978 conference planning committee specified "the elderly" as a workshop topic in order to gather more information on the general situation of the elderly Asian Americans in New York City and to find ways to address their many problems.

The last decennial census counted 20,085,000 individuals in the country who were 65 years old or over. This number constituted 9.9 percent of the total population. Based on a 20 percent sample, the Census Bureau estimated that within the Asian community, there were 26,856 Chinese, 47,159 Japanese, 2,340 Koreans, and 21,249 Pilipinos in this age group.[2] From 1960 to 1970, there was an increase of 97.7 percent in the elderly Chinese, Japanese, and Pilipino population in contrast to a 20.4 percent increase in the same period for the total elderly population of all races. (See table 2.1.) In its final report, the Pacific/Asian Elderly Research Project noted that "while the United States elderly segment grew at a rate faster than the national growth, from 1960 to 1970 the Chinese, Japanese, and Pilipino elderly segments grew at three to five times this rate."[3] In 1970, there were 12,708 Asian elderly aged 60 and over in New York City. This number included 8,320 elderly Chinese, 2,063 elderly Japanese, and 1,307 elderly Pilipinos in the New York Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA). (See table 2.2.)

From 1971 to 1976, the volume of immigration of those 60 years old and over from China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Korea, and the Philippines increased by 299 percent. (See table 2.3.) The high rate of increase in the number of elderly immigrants is the result of certain provisions in the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 that permitted the reunification of families. Many young professionals who took advantage of the liberalized immigration law petitioned for their parents to enter the United States.

According to workshop participants, while the Asian elderly in New York City increased in number, the Asian community has seen no evidence that adequate efforts are being made to meet the needs of their elderly now or in the future. The Pacific/Asian Elderly Research Project conducted a survey of 56 State and area agencies on aging in a study funded by the National Institute of Mental Health. Responses from 39 State and 44 area agencies revealed that many of them had no information on Pacific or Asian elderly, and among those

[1] New York State Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *The Forgotten Minority: Asian Americans in New York City* (November 1977), p. 8.

[2] U.S., Administration on Aging, *Census and Baseline Data: A Detailed Report* by Pacific/Asian Elderly Research Project (August 1977), pp. 28, 29, 31-33.

[3] Pacific/Asian Elderly Research Project, *Final Report* (San Jose, Calif.: May 1978), p. 9.

TABLE 2.1

U.S. Elderly Population. 65 Years and over, 1930-70

Population 65 years old and over	U.S. total (000)	Asian American elderly Total	Chinese	Japanese	Pilipino
1970	20,085	95,264	26,856	47,159	21,249
1960	16,675	48,196	12,415	29,239	6,546
1950	12,397	16,815	5,378	10,676	761
1940	9,031	6,678	3,576	2,983	119
1930	6,705	4,676	3,905	724	47
Percent increase of elderly 65 and over					
1960-70	20.4	97.7	116.3	61.3	224.6
1950-60	34.5	186.6	130.9	173.8	760.2
1940-50	37.3	151.8	50.4	257.9	539.5
1930-40	34.7	42.8	-8.4	312.0	153.2

Source: Pacific/Asian Elderly Research Project, *Census and Baseline Data: A Detailed Report* (August, 1977).

TABLE 2.2

Asian Elderly Population in New York SMSA, 1970

	Chinese		Japanese		Pilipino		Total	
Total	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
All ages	77,099	100.0	16,630	100.0	12,455	100.0	106,184	100.0
60-64 years old	2,880	3.7	446	2.7	439	3.5	3,765	3.5
65 years and over	5,440	7.1	1,617	9.7	868	7.0	7,925	7.5
75 years and over	1,625	2.1	657	3.9	224	1.8	2,506	2.4
Male								
All ages	41,486	100.0	8,187	100.0	5,873	100.0	55,546	100.0
60-64 years old	1,765	4.2	228	2.8	352	6.0	2,345	4.2
65 years and over	3,558	8.6	717	8.8	640	10.9	4,915	8.8
75 years and over	1,021	2.5	285	3.5	119	2.0	1,425	2.6
Female								
All ages	35,613	100.0	8,443	100.0	6,582	100.0	50,638	100.0
60-64 years old	1,115	3.1	218	2.6	87	1.3	1,420	2.8
65 years and over	1,882	5.3	900	10.7	228	3.5	3,010	5.9
75 years and over	604	1.7	372	4.4	105	1.6	1,081	2.1

Source: U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1970 Census of Population, *Subject Report: Japanese, Chinese, and Filipinos in the United States*, PC(2)-1G

TABLE 2.3

Asian Immigrants 60 Years and Over, 1971-76

	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	Total
China and Taiwan							
Male	328	458	713	735	712	776	3,772
Female	578	761	1,074	959	1,042	992	5,406
Total	906	1,219	1,787	1,694	1,754	1,768	9,128
Hongkong							
Male	13	6	11	16	11	23	80
Female	5	5	11	15	17	24	77
Total	18	11	22	31	28	47	157
Japan							
Male	45	45	49	37	38	53	267
Female	71	108	93	104	94	145	615
Total	116	153	142	141	132	198	882
Korea							
Male	71	104	165	186	213	[illegible]	1,020
Female	115	209	385	393	427	5[illegible]7	2,056
Total	186	313	550	579	640	80[illegible]	3,076
Philippines							
Male	235	374	521	954	1,143	1,900	5,127
Female	419	628	821	1,576	1,734	2,781	7,959
Total	654	1,002	1,342	2,530	2,877	4,681	13,086
Total							
Male	692	987	1,459	1,928	2,117	3,033	10,216
Female	1,188	1,711	2,384	3,047	3,314	4,469	16,113
Total	1,880	2,698	3,843	4,975	5,431	7,502	26,329
Percent increase							
1971-72	1972-73	1973-74	1974-75	1975-76	1971-75	1971-76	
43.5	42.4	29.5	9.2	38.1	188.9	299.0	

Source: U.S., Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service, *Annual Report, 1971-76*, table 9.

who did, the information was limited primarily to census statistics without needs assessments or baseline data.[4]

The elderly workshop had four panelists, one each from the Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Pilipino communities. The presentations and the ensuing discussion identified and elaborated on the following key issues affecting the Asian American elderly in New York.

Census Statistics and Other Studies

The workshop participants decried the unavailability of accurate and up-to-date information on the Asian American elderly. Both on the national as well as on the local level, data on elderly Asian Americans are scant, outdated, and lacking in substance. There are little or no health statistics on Asian Americans. Also, information on the number of persons who are eligible for but are not receiving social security, supplemental security income (SSI), or any other form of public assistance is unavailable. Census statistics, the only data available to service agencies, consist of basic housing and population characteristics, not all of which are classified by specific age groups. Published census information on Asian elderly is limited to not much more than a head count, the proportion of those who have incomes below the poverty level, and the number who are still in the labor force. Data are available only on three of the many Asian subgroups—the Chinese, Japanese, and Pilipinos—in the New York SMSA. (See table 2.2.) According to David Shen, one of the panel members, the existing data are not

[4] Ibid., p. 93.

helpful because they are 8 years old and because of the census undercount.

Workshop participants were told that because basic census statistics are insufficient and needs assessments have not been tabulated, the Asian communities have been forced to conduct their own research on the elderly and to document their problems and their needs in order to find solutions for them. The Japanese and Korean communities are conducting their own surveys to get a better estimate of the size of their elderly population, as well as of their life conditions.

Rev. Ty Shin, executive director of Korean Community Services and moderator of the workshop on the elderly, stated that the general lack of information about Asian elderly has translated into a lack of outreach and, consequently, to a lack of service delivery to this population. He said that while the Chinese elderly in Chinatown have received some public as well as private assistance, other Asians in the city have had to rely mostly on their own resources to take care of the aging in their respective communities. Although acknowledging the aid given to the Chinese elderly in Chinatown, he noted that such aid was also inadequate to meet their great need.

Language and Culture

Workshop participants noted that many of their elderly have very limited knowledge of English and that some are non-English speaking. The 1970 census indicated that 73 percent of the Asian elderly in New York State are foreign born. (See table 2.4.) Although it is not known how many of them came to New York State in their senior years, the impression is that a large number of the elderly are recent immigrants who arrived after the liberalization of U.S. immigration policies in 1965. This would seem to indicate that many of the Asian elderly entered the United States at a time in their lives when learning a new language would be a monumental task, if not altogether impossible.

Conferees said that as a result of their English-language deficiency, Asian American elderly are uninformed about social services and have limited recreational opportunities. Literature about health and social service programs is not printed in Asian languages by the public agencies, although some translations are available in community agencies. Similarly, recreation programs for senior citizens are geared to the general American public and have little attraction for immigrant Asian Americans.

Various other cultural problems confront the elderly Asian Americans. Often they no longer enjoy the traditional forms of respect they knew in their countries of origin. They lose the status position they held back home as family providers and revered authority figures overseeing the growth and development of their families. Once transported to America, many of the Asian American elderly have become little more than housewatchers or babysitters with recreation confined mainly to watching television programs that have little relevance to their lives.

Social Isolation

Depending on when they came to this country, the social isolation of Asian elderly results either from their limited English-speaking ability or from their negative experiences in the past. The new immigrants, who live with their families, are still socially isolated. When uprooted from their homelands, they left behind not only familiar surroundings but also other relatives and lifelong friends, as well as the customs, expectations, and aspirations of their people. With little or no knowledge of English, their opportunities for making new friends, getting around the city, and going to theaters, plays, and movies are limited. Upon arrival in this country, the Asian elderly are confronted with a new lifestyle and a different structuring of values; they find themselves in an alien surrounding. The Asian elderly in the United States are truly "displaced persons," said one conference participant.

The Asian American elderly who have been here for a long time have a different kind of problem. They came in the early 1900s when the United States was importing cheap labor from Asia to work the sugar plantations in Hawaii and the farmlands of the San Joaquin and Imperial Valleys in California. Various exclusionary laws enacted at the time prevented the Asian men from bringing in their wives and their families. The same laws also forbade them to marry white women. In effect, they were denied the right to have families.

Workshop participants discussed other forms of racial prejudice and discrimination suffered by the early Asian immigrants. They were objects of ridicule, often their homes were burned down, and they were forced to engage only in certain occupations. Many lived in constant fear of their lives.

TABLE 2.4

Nativity of Asian Americans in New York State, 1970

	Total	Native born		Foreign born	
		Number	Percent Total	Number	Percent Total
Population all ages					
Chinese	83,181	29,586	36	53,595	64
Japanese	19,805	8,551	43	11,254	57
Pilipino	13,557	4,166	31	9,391	69
Korean	6,109	2,254	37	3,855	63
Total	122,652	44,557	36	78,095	64
Population 65 years and over					
Chinese	5,721	928	16	4,793	84
Japanese	1,914	1,014	53	900	47
Pilipino	881	268	30	613	70
Korean	178	125	70	53	30
Total	8,694	2,335	27	6,359	73
Percent of total population 65 years and over					
Chinese	6.9	3.1		8.9	
Japanese	9.7	11.9		8.0	
Pilipino	6.5	6.4		6.5	
Korean	2.9	5.5		1.4	
Total	7.1	5.2		8.1	

Source: U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1970 Census of Population, *Detailed Characteristics, New York State*, PC(1)-D, table 139.

Today, there are still many survivors of those troubled times. The Asian American elderly who experienced those times carry the memories of the ridicule, the hardship, the torment—in short, the bitter struggle that they endured. They usually live by themselves and they seldom go out of their homes. They are afraid to step out because of their past difficulties, because of what they hear about violence in the streets today, and because of their failing health or physical condition.

When Asian American elderly do venture out of their homes, it is usually just within the immediate vicinity of their place of residence. But there are very few senior citizens centers in the neighborhoods where the Asian American elderly are to be found throughout the city. Chinatown has several centers and there is a Korean Community Center in the upper West Side. The Japanese American Help for the Aging (JAHFA) is a group that has surveyed the needs of the Japanese elderly and has tried to get a housing project and senior citizens center for Japanese American elderly, but so far has not succeeded in either effort. The Philippine Americans for Community Action and Development (PACAD) is an organization that made similar attempts in the interests of the Pilipino elderly, sometimes working in conjunction with JAHFA representatives. The Pilipino effort was a failure also.

The fear in the hearts of the Asian American elderly, their cultural and physical handicaps, and the lack of senior citizens centers in their neighborhoods tremendously limit the recreational opportunities open to them, especially when radio and television programs are not geared for their entertainment. Severino Foronda, president of the Pilipino Social Club and one of the workshop panelists, expressed the need for senior citizens centers in Asian neighborhoods and oriented towards the interests and needs of Asian American elderly.

Health

Although health statistics on Asian Americans are sorely limited, the workshop participants charged that the health problems of many Asian Americans are of the same or even greater severity as those of the general population. Furthermore, it was reported that Asian elderly are not utilizing available health services appropriate to their level of need.

The discussion indicated that although poverty and language handicaps are natural barriers to proper utilization of health facilities by elderly Asians, a less obvious but equally prevalent inhibitor is culture. Asians view sickness differently than persons from Western cultures. Eastern medicine is different from Western medicine. What is routine treatment procedure for Western doctors in some instances may conflict with the practice in Chinese medicine where the forces of nature are seen to have greater relation to the healing or treatment process. For this reason, Chinese elderly may refrain from going to clinics or hospitals where there are no Chinese doctors who will understand their concerns and be sensitive to them. Different interpersonal behavior patterns exhibited by Western doctors also contribute to the fear and the feeling of inhibition and intimidation that many Asians experience when seeking medical care.

In Sou Kim, president of the Korean Senior Citizens Society of Greater New York, stressed the need for more health care services and increased use of Medicare and Medicaid for the Asian elderly. He also noted the language problem encountered by many of the elderly and pointed to the need for Asian American staff in health service facilities.

Limited Income

Asian Americans who came to this country in the late 1800s and early 1900s were manual workers who labored in the gold mines of California, laid the tracks for the Central Pacific Railroad, tilled the soil, built irrigation systems, and harvested the farm crops in California. They were also later employed in domestic occupations as janitors, houseboys, cooks, laundrymen, and stewards in the U.S. Navy.

Early discriminatory laws and practices restricted the types of occupations that Asian Americans could engage in. These occupations limited the Asian Americans' income-generating capabilities and their ability to save for their old age. The nature of their employment often did not allow them to be enrolled in the social security system and many of them had no retirement benefits or pensions.

Workshop participants said that many elderly Asian Americans, therefore live on very limited incomes and are eligible for public assistance (see table 2.5.), but many of them do not receive any form of benefit from the government. Martha Kaihatsu, a member of JAHFA and also one of the panelists, offered several explanations for this lack of utilization of the government's service agencies:

1. The Asian American elderly do not trust a government that has treated them unjustly in the past. She cited the "shattering" experience of the Japanese in the internment camps during World War II as an example.
2. The service agencies do not make enough effort to reach out to the Asian American elderly, and this situation is exacerbated by language and cultural problems.

But, whether it is due to pride, unfamiliarity with the government institutions, or mere ignorance of their eligibility for assistance, it was agreed among the participants that relatively few Asian Americans receive the benefits of Federal and State programs.

Among those Asian Americans who receive social security or welfare, the mean incomes are generally lower than that for the general population, except for the Japanese in New York State and for the Pilipinos in rural areas. (See table 2.6.)

From 15 percent to 27 percent of New York State's Asian American elderly have incomes below the poverty level. For this reason, a large number of them are still in the labor force. In New York City, for example, 36 percent of Japanese males age 65 and over are still working, according to the 1970 census. Among the females age 65 and over in the Asian American community, the Chinese have the greatest number still employed, with approximately 15 percent of them in the labor force. (See table 2.5.) According to members of the Chinese community, many of their elderly do not only work full time, but they also work more than 40 hours a week to make ends meet.

Housing

Because of their limited incomes, many Asian American elderly live in substandard housing and suffer from the deteriorating conditions. They do not know of other alternatives open to them; therefore, they do not benefit from housing assistance programs that are available to all elderly but

TABLE 2.5

Selected Characteristics of Asian American Elderly in New York, 1970

	Japanese	Chinese	Pilipino
Total population all ages	**19,794**	**81,903**	**14,045**
Population 65 years and over			
New York State			
Total	1,954	5,615	904
Male	845	3,665	657
Female	1,109	1,950	247
New York SMSA			
Total	1,617	5,440	868
Male	717	3,558	640
Female	900	1,882	228
New York City			
Total	1,345	5,117	812
Male	633	3,367	610
Female	712	1,750	202
Population with Income less than Poverty			
New York State	1,996	13,188	1,724
Percent	10.2	16.3	12.5
Percent 65 years and over	26.5	16.4	15.3
New York SMSA	1,608	12,466	1,531
Percent	9.8	16.3	12.5
Percent 65 years and over	26.4	16.9	15.9
New York City: Persons	1,423	11,925	1,436
Percent	10.8	17.1	13.0
Percent 65 years and over	24.9	17.3	16.7
Percent 65 years and over in labor force			
New York State			
Male	35.1	21.9	21.5
Female	9.7	14.8	11.7
New York SMSA			
Male	37.1	21.8	21.6
Female	9.8	15.4	12.7
New York City			
Male	36.0	21.2	19.8
Female	10.1	15.4	10.9

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1970 Census of Population, *Subject Report: Japanese, Chinese and Filipinos in the United States*, PC(2)-1G.

are extended primarily to non-Asians. Workshop participants took note of the fact that of all Asian groups in the city only the elderly Chinese in Chinatown have housing projects, and that attempts made by other Asian groups to develop a housing project elsewhere in the city with government assistance met with failure. Table 2.7 shows that a high percentage of elderly Asians, particularly Koreans and Japanese, live alone and would probably benefit from subsidized housing.

TABLE 2.6

Mean Social Security and Public Assistance Incomes for Families, 1969

	Social Security	Amount Difference	Public assistance	Amount difference
U.S. urban				
All races	$1676	$0	$1,387	$0
Japanese	1,498	-178	1,332	-55
Chinese	1,310	-366	1,245	-142
Pilipinos	1,457	-219	1,358	-29
U.S. rural*				
All Races	$1,539	$0	$1,062	$0
Japanese	1,486	-53	1,044	-18
Chinese	1,225	-314	NA	NA
Pilipinos	1,464	-75	1,385	+323
New York State				
All Races	$1,717	$0	$1,946	$0
Japanese	1,774	+57	NA	NA
Chinese	1,227	-490	1,320	-626
Pilipinos	1,626	-91	1,336	-610

*Rural nonfarm only - mean incomes on rural farm are largely not available.

Source: U.S., Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Special Concerns, *A Study of Selected Socio-Economic Characteristics of Ethnic Minorities Based on the 1970 Census*, vol. II: Asian Americans (July 1974), table G-3.

TABLE 2.7

Household Composition of Asians 65 Years and Over in New York State, 1970

	Chinese		Japanese		Pilipino		Korean	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Total households	3,256	100.0	1,221	100.0	605	100.0	66	100.0
2 or more person households	2,341	71.9	611	50.0	452	74.7	18	27.3
1 person households	915	28.1	610	50.0	153	25.3	38	57.6
Male	613		222		77		0	
Female	302		388		76		38	

Source: U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1970 Census of Population, *Subject Reports: Housing of Selected Racial Groups*, HC(7)-9.

LUCHA POR CUBA
团结争取胜利
FIGHT FOR CUBA

Chapter 3

Employment

Employment was one of the major issues addressed in the informal public hearing conducted in 1974 by the New York State Advisory Committee to gather information on equal opportunity for Asian Americans. Members of the Asian American communities gave testimony regarding various discriminatory practices that they had experienced, while some corporate representatives presented their affirmative action plans and answered charges leveled by the Asian American community.

The informal hearing brought to the public's attention many employment-related problems of Asian Americans. Foremost among these were the hiring practices in both the public and the private sectors, the failure of Asian Americans to deal with employment inequalities, and policies and legislation in health care occupations that were discriminatory to them.[1] The 1978 conference included a workshop on employment in order to examine the current employment situation and to plan and develop ways to remedy employment inequalities in the public and private sectors. The employment workshop was divided into three separate groups, each dealing with one of the problems mentioned above: the health care system, public employment, and overcoming employment inequalities.

The Health Care System

The health workshop was chaired by Dr. Setsuko M. Nishi, a professor of sociology at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. She is also co-chair of the Asian American Subcommittee, New York State Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. According to Dr. Nishi, it is widely stated that a disproportionate number of Asians—both citizens and noncitizens—are employed in the health care system of the United States. The fact that the Asian Americans often occupy the lowest paid and/or least desirable positions in the system has not received wide publicity; however, additional problems face foreign-trained Asian personnel. For example, the workshop participants were told that doctors who have come to New York for special training under the exchange visitors program often tend to work in nonuniversity-affiliated, inner-city hospitals that are generally unattractive to American graduates. Dr. Nishi said that the foreign medical graduates also are often assigned to night duty when specialists and other staff physicians who can teach them are not on hand.

According to Dr. D.G. Lanjewar, president of the Association of Indians in America and a member of the American Medical Association Committee on Foreign Medical Graduate Affairs, a more serious problem for Asian doctors who are here under the exchange program deals with a series of immigration laws and licensing requirements for foreign medical graduates.

The Health Professions Educational Assistance Act of 1976, Public Law No. 94-484 (codified in scattered sections of 42 U.S.C.), amended the Immigration and Nationality Act[2] to require that foreign medical graduates pass an examination as a requirement for sponsorship under the exchange visitors

[1] New York State Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *The Forgotten Minority: Asian Americans in New York City* (November 1977), pp. 22–38.

[2] 8 U.S.C. §1181 (Supp. 1976).

programs and eligibility for an immigrant visa. The examination proved to be a very difficult test that effectively screened out foreign-born Asian physicians who otherwise filled the staff requirements of many metropolitan hospitals. Public Law No. 95-83, 91 Stat. 395, was passed exempting foreign medical graduates from taking the examination if they had a State license, a practice, and a specialty board certification by January 9, 1977. However, the amendment did not sufficiently relieve the hardships placed on the foreign medical graduates, many of whom did not meet all three conditions, Dr. Lanjewar said.

Reuben Seguritan, a Pilipino lawyer, claimed that both laws (Public Law Nos. 94-484 and 95-83) were discriminatory. In the first place, Public Law No. 94-484 was a reaction to the increasing influx of foreign medical graduates. According to him, the medical establishment saw the increasing numbers of Asian doctors as a threat and raised the issue of quality medical care, blaming the foreign medical graduates for substandard medical care. Thus, the requirement for passing the visa qualifying examination before sponsorship under the visitors exchange program was established, he said.

Early in 1975, the Educational Council for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG), a nonprofit independent organization, had ruled to discontinue sponsorship of foreign medical graduates who applied for migrant status under the occupational preference categories. Although the purpose of the exchange visitors program was to train foreign medical graduates in this country for a specific period of time, the ECFMG decided the program was serving to facilitate the foreign medical graduates' admission as permanent residents. The ruling was subsequently withdrawn due to strong protests received from the community. During its existence, the ruling succeeded in causing many foreign medical graduates to withdraw their petitions for a change of immigration status.

Oak Soon Hong of the Korean Nurses Association presented the situation of the foreign nurse graduates. According to her, many Asian nurses are also exploited. Like the foreign medical graduates, they are often assigned night and evening shifts. Furthermore, many of them are hired as general nurses, practical nurses, or nurse's aides despite years of experience as registered nurses in their home countries, because they have not passed State licensing examinations. Additionally, many licensed foreign nurse graduates had difficulty finding employment as registered nurses because most hospitals in New York require 2 years of experience in the United States. Because the nurses have to make a living, they accept lower paying positions to get the experience.

During the discussion, questions were raised as to whether the licensing examinations were job related. In addition, there were queries concerning the language used in many multiple choice questions. Participants charged that many of the tests were culturally biased and the language used was unfair. For these reasons, Asians were not scoring well on the examinations.

The concerns of Asian pharmacists were expressed by O. Yoon Kwon of the Korean Pharmaceutical Association in America. He said that New York is one of only two States in the Nation that grants licenses to pharmacists who have graduated from schools in another country. For this reason, many Asian pharmacists come to New York. However, they are not visible in the practice of their profession because many of them have been forced into other occupations due to stringent requirements for licensure. To obtain a license in New York, the candidate must have completed 3 years of professional study and received a diploma from a school whose program meets the requirements of the New York State Department of Education. He or she must also serve a 1-year internship and pass the State licensing examination.

Mr. Kwon said that Asian pharmacists experience two major problems with the requirements:

1. American graduates are required to serve only a 6-month internship in contrast to the 12-month internship for the foreign trained; and
2. The internship period is served on an unpaid basis.

Unlike their American counterparts who are likely to be young, single, and just out of college, the Asian-trained pharmacists are usually older and with more experience in the profession. They are also more likely to have families to support. The State requirements for licensure create severe economic hardship for Asian pharmacists and, therefore, have the effect of closing the door on the opportunity for many of them to enter the profession.

Public Employment

Ms. Loida Nicolas-Lewis, a lawyer and a member of the New York State Advisory Committee to the

U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, served as both moderator and panelist in the workshop on public employment. She said that large private corporations, in contrast to the public sector, are more closely scrutinized in their implementation of affirmative action, in terms of their hiring and promotion practices,, and training opportunities for minorities and women. They are vulnerable to charges of noncompliance with Federal and State regulations that require equal employment opportunity for persons without regard to race, creed, age, sex, and national origin. A number of individual as well as class action discrimination suits have been filed against them.

Government agencies, on the other hand, are not as easy targets for discrimination suits, she said. Public employees should set the example and take the lead in implementing the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972. In cases of noncompliance they should be more vulnerable to charges of discrimination. However, the conferees were told that it is more difficult to file a discrimination case and win if the defendant is a government agency.

Ms. Lewis described the barriers facing Asian Americans in government. To begin with, employment opportunities in government, whether on the local, State, or national level, are not known in the Asian community. When word does reach the community and inquiries are made, it is often the case that "the law requires" or "the policy dictates" that candidates be selected first from within the agency and, if the agency has to go outside, then it selects from a preexisting list of eligibles. The eligible candidates are obtained from city, State, or Federal civil service commissions. Because Asian Americans are generally not well informed about the procedures to follow in order to get a rating and to be placed on a civil service list, many well-qualified Asian Americans are excluded from consideration for public employment.

To show that Asian Americans are poorly represented in the Federal employment system, Ms. Lewis selected certain minority statistics from the U.S. Office of Personnel Management publications for 1970, 1975, and 1976. The data revealed that from May 1970 to November 1976 the number of "Orientals" or Asian Americans employed in all agencies in the Federal Government went from 21,102 to 25,083, or from 0.9 percent to 1.0 percent of the total number of employees. These figures reflected an increase of 0.1 percentage points in 6 years. In contrast, total minority employment for the same period increased from 501,871 (19.4 percent) in 1970 to 514,540 (21.3 percent) in 1976, an improvement of 1.9 percentage points. The statistics revealed that Asian Americans are not making as many gains as other minorities in Federal employment. (See exhibit 3.1.)

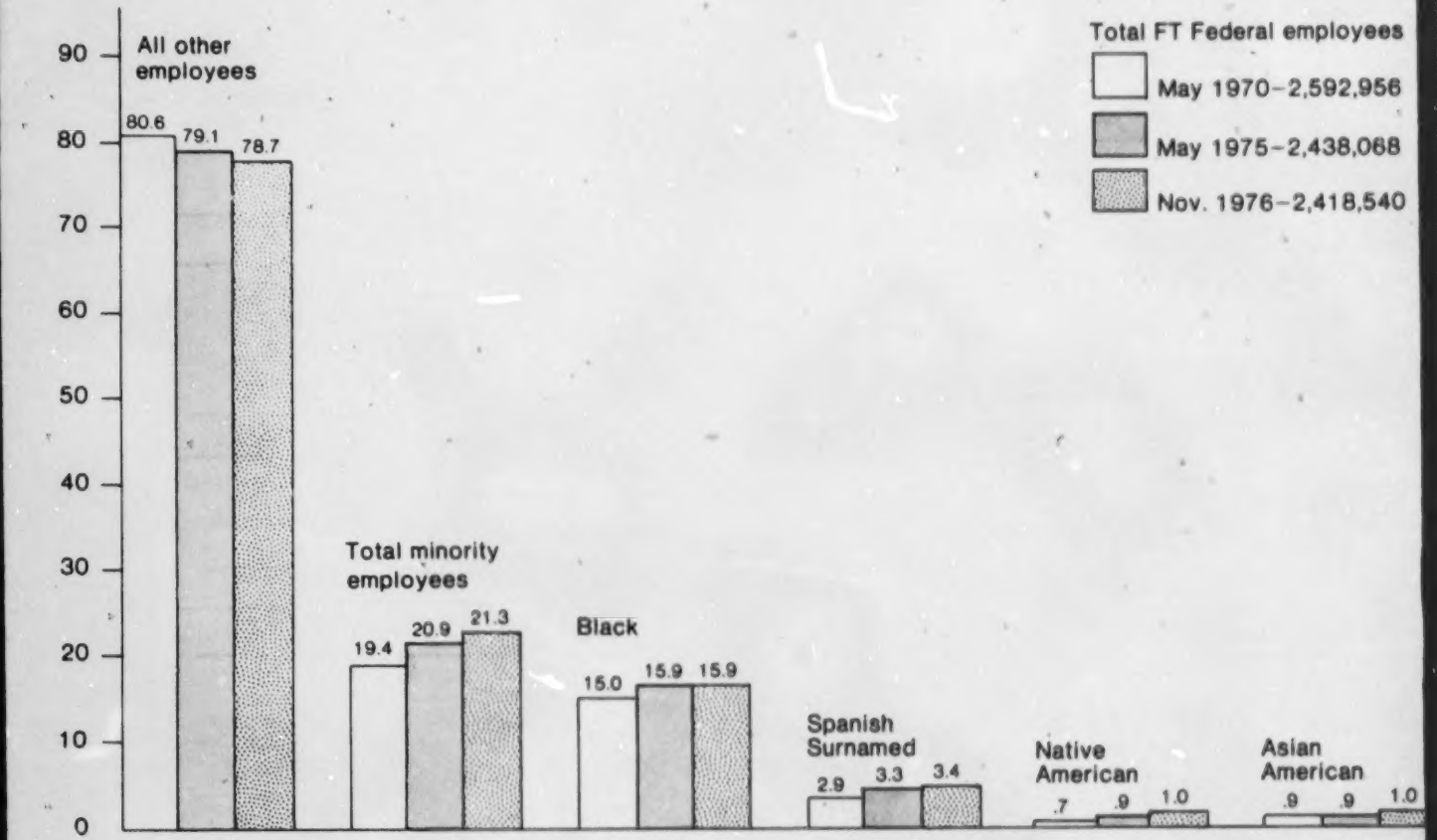
Looking at the occupational distribution solely within the Asian American population, between 1970 and 1976 a positive trend seemed to be indicated by the increased participation of Asian Americans in the white-collar occupations. (See the general schedule in exhibit 3.2.) During the same period, their percentage in higher grade levels also increased slightly. (See exhibit 3.3.) However, judging from the one set of statistics alone, there was no way to ascertain the extent to which upward mobility and/or new hiring contributed to the increased Asian American employment under the general schedule. Asian Americans are also underrepresented in Federal employment in New York State. Most Federal offices are located in New York City where Asian Americans make up 2 percent of the population; however, only 0.7 percent of the Federal work force is Asian. (See exhibit 3.4.)

With regard to employment by the State of New York, Asian Americans have made a significant increase since 1974 as shown in table 3.1. The table shows that once again there is a disproportionate overrepresentation of Asian Americans in the health areas and not enough in other important areas like social services, education, and labor.

On the local level, Mr. Chong, president of the Asian American Postal Employees and one of the panelists, related his experience in preparing members of the Chinese community to take the postal examination. Early in January 1978 there were rumors in Chinatown that the U.S. Postal Service would be hiring 3,000 workers from the five boroughs. A group of Chinese leaders, including Mr. Chong, decided that this would be a good opportunity for some people from the Chinese community to move out of menial jobs in the restaurants and garment factories. They, therefore, found a place to hold classes, developed a curriculum based on past postal examinations, and recruited "students" from the Chinese community to prepare them for taking the postal examination. The fact that the majority of these applicants scored in the nineties was an indication of the success of their efforts.

EXHIBIT 3.1

Percentage Distribution of Full-Time Federal Employees by Minority Group, May 1970, May 1975, and November 1976



1970–2,091,085	501,871	389,355	73,968	14,446	21,102
1975–1,928,154	509,914	387,043	79,970	21,138	21,763
1976–1,904,000	514,540	384,515	81,558	23,382	25,083

EXHIBIT 3.2

Percentage Distribution of Asian American Full-Time Federal Employees, May 1970 and 1976

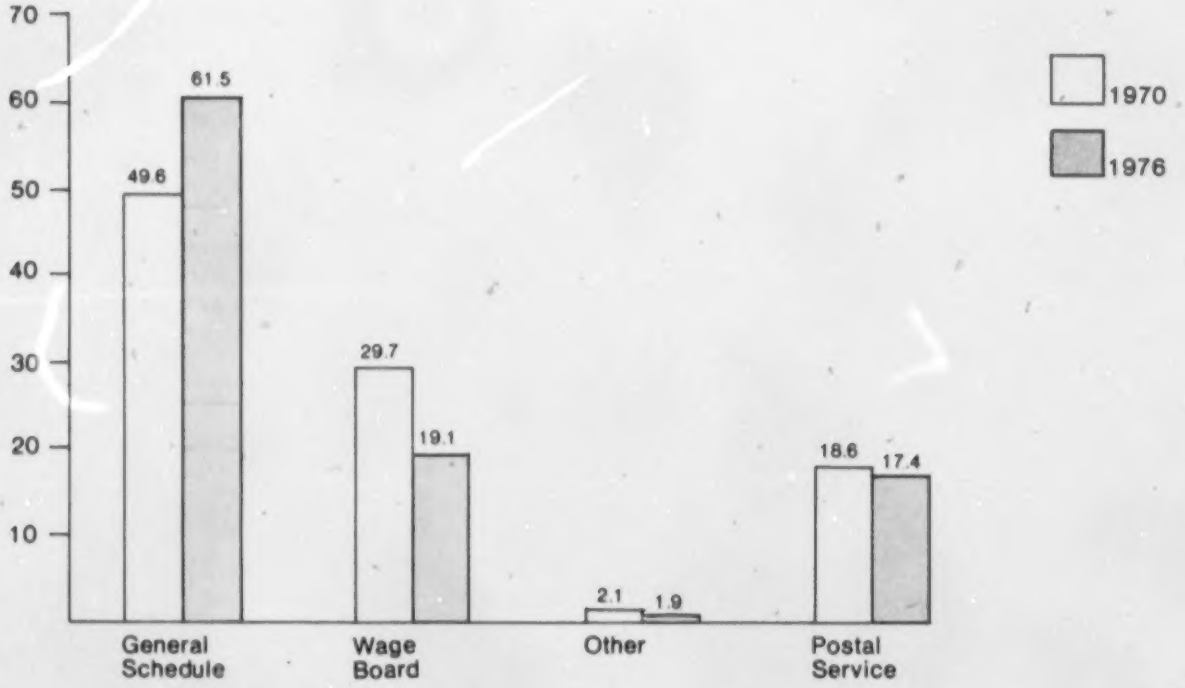


EXHIBIT 3.3

Percentage Distribution of Asian American Full-Time Federal Employees in the General Schedule Grade Grouping, May 1970 and 1976

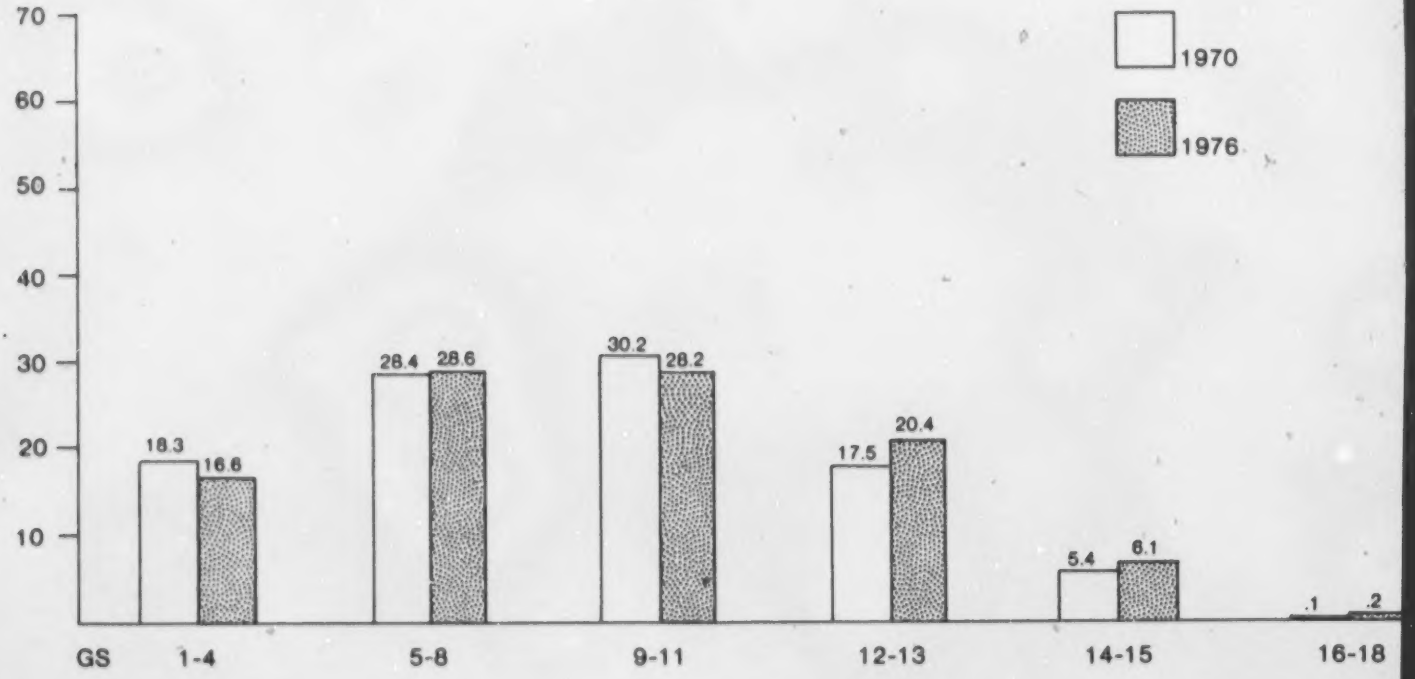


EXHIBIT 3.4

Percentage Distribution of Full-Time Federal Employees by Minority Group in New York State, November 1975

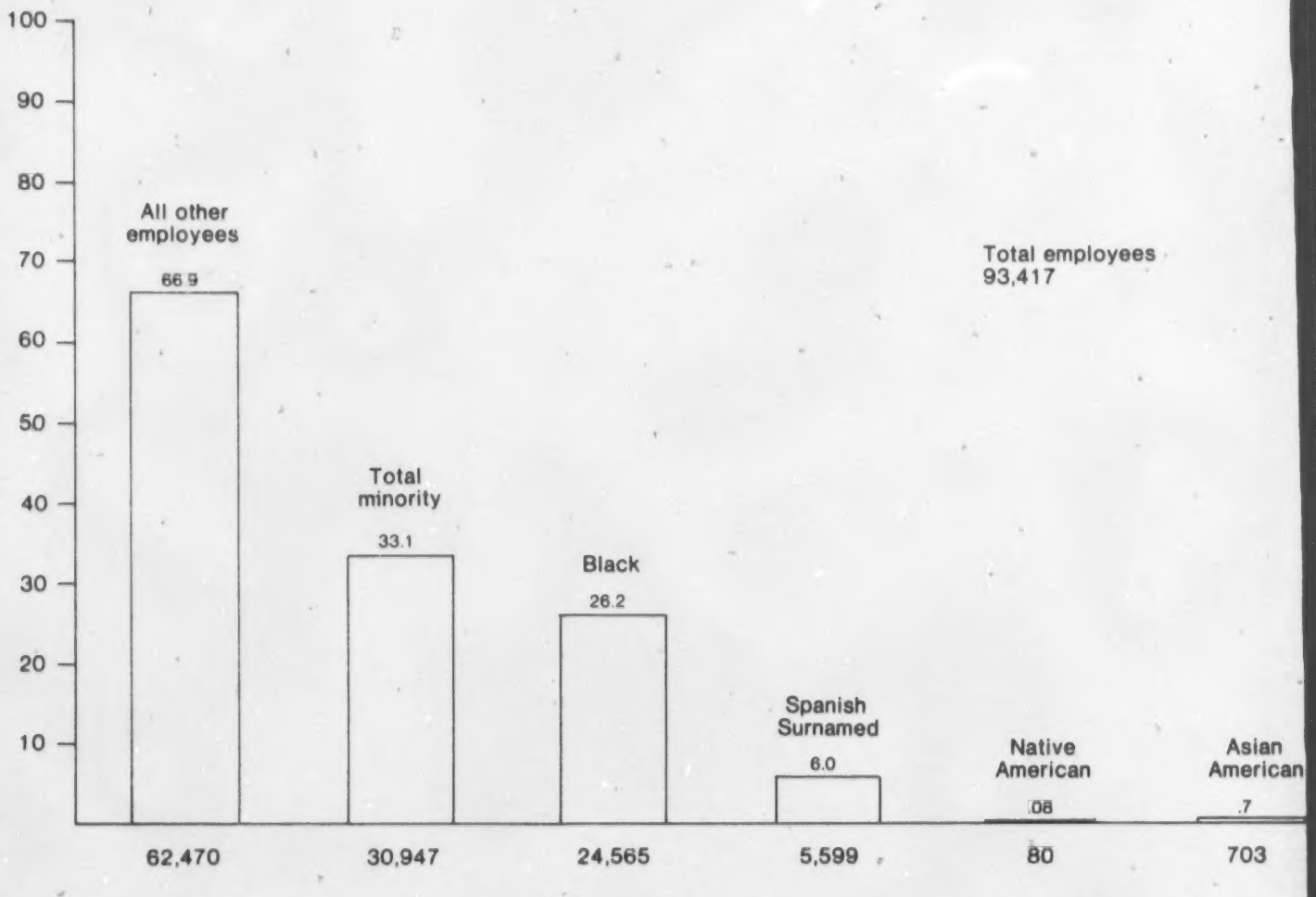


TABLE 3.1
Asian American Employment in New York State Agencies, 1974 and 1977

	All groups		Asians		Percent Asian	
	1974	1977	1974	1977	1974	1977
Total all agencies	179,168	160,249	963	1,312	0.5	0.8
Selected State agencies						
State Division of Human Rights	215	206	0	2	0.0	0.97
Health	4,540	5,191	63	111	1.39	2.14
General Services	3,041	3,230	1	13	0.03	0.40
Labor	9,248	9,026	15	28	0.16	0.31
Law	1,011	1,048	0	3	0.0	0.29
Mental Hygiene	61,010	67,585	629	914	1.03	1.35
Social Services	2,304	2,839	10	18	0.43	0.63
State University of NY	26,482	31,450	117	484	0.44	1.54
Correctional Services	9,253	11,450	18	33	0.19	0.29
Education	3,754	3,509	14	18	0.37	0.51

Source: New York State Annual Ethnic Survey, 1974 and 1977.

Ronald Chin of Asian Americans for Equality advocated increased affirmative action outreach programs to the poor in the community. While acknowledging the need for, and the importance of, affirmative action in college admissions and in the employment of professionals, Mr. Chin stressed the greater need for affirmative action programs to address the poor struggling for survival. According to him, there is a strong need to place more emphasis on helping the less fortunate to attain a better quality of life.

The underrepresentation of Asian Americans in the public sector is also evidenced in their lack of membership in District Council 37 of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), that represents a sizable percentage of New York City employees. Sandy Hom, a lawyer with District Council 37 and a resource person at the conference, said that there were few Asian Americans in public service and that only a few of the council's 80,000 members are Asian Americans. He said, however, that the council was making an effort to inform employees of the need for minority participation and to provide educational programs and training that would enable Asian Americans to enter the public sector. Workshop participants singled out the underrepresentation of Asian Americans in manpower centers throughout the city. It was apparent from the workshop discussion that an educational campaign was needed to make employers aware of Asian Americans as a distinct group.

Overcoming Employment Inequalities

Inequalities in employment affect Asian Americans in the whole range of occupational categories. Yet, these inequalities are often so subtle that they are not perceived even by some Asian Americans themselves. Dr. Setsuko M. Nishi, a moderator of the employment workshop, said that this phenomenon results partially from misleading overgeneralizations of national statistics on the socioeconomic status of Asian Americans. Such data traditionally have used social indicators that may be applicable to the whole population but that cause serious problems of interpretation when applied to a minority group like the Asian Americans. According to Dr. Nishi:

> Given the absence of detailed and careful analysis to describe the highly diverse and dispersed Asian American population, it is important that the appropriate indicators be selected. Indicators used up to this point place Asian Americans in an unusually disadvantaged situation in seeking to redress the difficulties with regard to inequalities. These are subtle, affecting a population that is not as yet a significant political force and whose indicators of inequalities are not the same as those of the larger population.

The occupational distribution of Asian Americans reveals a high proportion of them in professional, technical, and managerial positions. Thus, it is assumed that they have equal educational and employment opportunities. What statistics do not show, however, is that large numbers of professionals from Asia were recruited for the specific purpose of meeting personnel shortages in certain fields, and that a sizable proportion of those Asian Americans in management categories are engaged in very small, high-risk, family-run businesses or are employed by Asian American firms.

According to Dr. Nishi, occupational categories, median incomes, and unemployment rates are not sufficient indicators of the economic well-being of Asian Americans. However, these indicators have been used with the result that opportunities for remedying inequalities have been closed to Asian Americans in many cases.

If Asian Americans are to obtain equal employment opportunity, they must know what equal employment opportunity is all about. If they want the system to work for them, they must know how the system works, one resource person said. This resource person also stated that many corporations hire an equal opportunity officer to protect themselves from charges of noncompliance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and with Federal and State executive orders that require government contractors to recruit, hire, train, and promote minorities. He said that these programs are geared for those who "scream the loudest." Since Asian Americans do not make noise, they are not included in many affirmative action plans.

One workshop panelist, Professor Anthony Kahng, a Rutgers University law professor, said that Americans think of "I," "me," and "mine," while Asians think of "others." Americans sue; Asians negotiate. An equal employment opportunity program set against the backdrop of a self-centered value system will not work for Asians operating from an "other-directed" value orientation. In order to overcome employment inequalities, it is necessary for Asians to first be aware of the different value system operating in this country, to learn it, and to act according to it. In so doing, they will heighten their awareness of the systemic discrimination and inequality that confront them.

Landy F. Eng, an urban affairs officer at Citibank, said that to operate within the system, Asian Americans must know the credentials needed to move up the corporate ladder. They must know how to evaluate their own assets against the requirements of various positions and corporate goals. They must also organize, gain visibility, and forcefully air their concerns about affirmative action and equal opportunity on the local, State, and national level.

"Protest action with community mobilization" was another suggested strategy. This message was given by Legan Wong of Asian Americans for Equality, who vividly described the demonstration protesting the failure to hire Chinese construction workers at Confucius Plaza in 1974. The 2-1/2 weeks of picketing and marching was covered by the major news media and elicited the support of both other Asians and non-Asians throughout the city. Following negotiations, 40 Asian Americans were hired by the unions to work in various construction sites throughout the city.

Research and class action suits were cited as additional techniques in the fight against employment discrimination. Furthermore, the point was stressed that an individual has a right to sue his or her employer for discrimination once the appeals procedure within governmental enforcement agencies has been exhausted. If, upon filing a discrimination charge, the employee is harassed, then the employee can file a second charge for harassment.

Workshop participants were reminded that unemployment rates were high and that competition for available jobs was keen. Jobs that were previously predominantly held by minorities were now being sought by members of the majority population. In the 26 manpower centers in New York City, there were not enough funds or job slots available. When looking for summer jobs, it was advised that interested persons should contact the agencies during the fall and take the Federal examinations that are given at that time.

Chapter 4

Youth

In 1970 there were 5,008 Chinese, 688 Japanese, and 4,459 Pilipinos under the age of 25 in the New York SMSA. (See table 4.1.) The subject of Asian American youth was not a major focus of the 1974 informal public hearing on equal opportunity for Asian Americans. But testimony from various community spokespersons pointed to serious youth problems in the areas of education, employment, and crime and delinquency. As a result, the 1978 conference planning committee decided to have a workshop on youth. Ms. Angie Cruz, a member of the planning committee, said that Asian American youth continue to be neglected due, in part, to persisting stereotypes of the obedient, respectful, malleable, and overprotected Asian American youngster. Ms. Cruz said:

> Except for the few cases of youth gang activities that have made the English [language] daily papers, the American public is not aware of the existence of violence in the Asian American communities and, therefore, does not believe that the problem of juvenile delinquency exists for us.

Four panel presentations in the workshop depicted the problems of the Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Pilipino youth. The panelists differed in their presentations insofar as they viewed the youth problems from the perspectives of the particular Asian communities that they represented, but they were in agreement on the general problems. The following is a summary of the discussion of those problem areas.

Lack of Statistics

The lack of statistics on Asian American youth was repeatedly cited during the workshop as a major factor that aggravated other existing problems. The workshop participants were told that due to the lack of data, Korean researchers and program planners are resorting to personal interviews as the primary source of information on the Korean community in New York City. According to Philip Nash, a Japanese youth leader, there is very little data available on either recently arrived immigrants or on *sansei* (third generation Japanese American) youth in the New York area. The number of immigrants from Japan is so small that the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service does not publish data other than national figures. Data on *sansei* youth are often lost for persons of mixed heritage. In the 1970 census, if a respondent of mixed parentage failed to report or decide on his or her race, the census enumerator generally classified that person according to the race of the father. Mr. Nash reported that since the 1950s, from 40 to 50 percent of Japanese women married outside their group.

According to Florentino Calabia of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights' national office, there are very few studies on Asian American youth. He cited various strategies generally used to arrive at youth needs but noted that few of these needs indicators actually measured Asian American youth problems. Mr. Calabia also added that the general lack of statistical and needs assessment data has made it difficult for Asian Americans to receive their equitable share of Federal, State, and local funds appropriated for youth services.

TABLE 4.1
Asian American Youth Population in New York SMSA, 1970

	Japanese		Chinese		Pilipino	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total						
All ages	16,630	100.0	77,099	100.0	12,455	100.0
Under 5	1,815	10.9	6,102	7.9	1,411	11.3
5–9	1,106	6.7	6,712	8.7	739	5.9
10–14	657	4.0	7,092	9.2	551	4.4
15–19	565	3.4	7,593	9.8	474	3.8
20–24	885	5.3	7,189	9.3	1,284	10.3
Males						
All ages	8,187	100.0	41,486	100.0	5,873	100.0
Under 5	936	11.4	3,114	7.5	823	14.0
5–9	633	7.7	3,427	8.3	375	6.4
10–14	311	3.8	3,756	9.1	327	5.6
15–19	301	3.7	4,115	9.9	167	2.8
20–24	390	4.8	3,388	8.2	373	6.4
Female						
All ages	8,433	100.0	35,613	100.0	6,532	100.0
Under 5	879	10.4	2,988	8.4	588	8.9
5–9	473	5.6	3,275	9.2	364	5.5
10–14	346	4.1	3,336	9.4	224	3.4
15–19	264	3.1	3,478	9.8	307	4.7
20–24	495	5.9	3,801	10.7	911	13.8

Source: U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1970 Census of Population, *Subject Report: Japanese, Chinese and Filipinos in the United States*, PC(2)-1G.

Language

Just as the failure to address adequately Asian American youth problems was attributed in part to the lack of statistical data, spokespersons from the Chinese, Korean, and Japanese communities said an English-language deficiency contributed to many youth problems. Except for immigrant Pilipino youth, most of whom studied English in the Philippine Islands, a majority of Asian youth come to the United States with very little knowledge of the English language. In 1970 there were 7,538 Chinese and 2,573 Japanese in the New York SMSA who were foreign born and could be expected to have a limited knowledge of English. (See table 4.2.)

A Japanese spokesperson indicated the need for tutoring and bilingual counseling for recently arrived Japanese students. Another workshop participant reported that Korean immigrants find that their main obstacle to gaining acceptance in the United States is their inability to speak English.

David Eng of Project Hing-Dai represented the Chinese community on the panel. He said that the majority of Chinese youth gang members were high school dropouts and did not speak any English. An indication was made that there might be a possible causal relationship between language deficiency and gang membership.

Mr. Calabia informed the group that statistics from the National Center for Educational Statistics indicated that a very large number of Asian American youths (many more than those being served) were potentially in need of bilingual-bicultural education as defined by the Bilingual Education Act of 1968.

Education

Three types of educational problems were discussed at the workshop: bilingual-bicultural education, day care centers, and dropouts or nonattendance at school.

The large number of immigrant youth from Asian countries indicates to some degree the extent of the need for bilingual-bicultural education in the Asian American community. Yet the participants at the workshop were informed that bilingual or English as a second language programs of the New York City Board of Education serve only Chinese students under 18 years old in Chinatown and in Woodside.

TABLE 4.2

Nativity of Chinese and Japanese Youth in New York SMSA, 1970

	Chinese					Japanese				
	Total	Native born	Percent of total	Foreign born	Percent of total	Total	Native born	Percent of total	Foreign born	Percent of total
Total Under										
18	16,743	14,008	83.7	2,735	16.3	4,203	2,186	52.0	2,017	48.0
18–24	8,342	3,539	42.4	4,803	57.6	813	257	31.6	556	68.4
	25,085	17,547	70.0	7,538	30.0	5,016	2,443	48.7	2,573	51.3
Male Under										
18	8,593	7,429	83.0	1,524	17.0	2,110	1,089	51.6	1,021	48.4
18–24	4,078	1,763	43.2	2,315	56.8	383	140	36.6	243	63.4
	13,031	9,192	70.5	3,839	29.5	2,493	1,229	49.3	1,264	50.7
Female Under										
18	7,790	6,579	84.5	1,211	15.5	2,093	1,097	52.4	996	47.6
18–24	4,264	1,776	41.7	2,488	58.3	430	117	27.2	313	72.8
	12,054	8,355	69.3	3,699	30.7	2,523	1,214	48.1	1,309	51.9

Source: U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *National Origin and Language*.

There were no other programs in the city for the Chinese or any other Asian group. It was mentioned, however, that in Flushing, Queens, the school board responded to the needs of Korean youths by having an Asian American guidance counselor at one of the high schools. Both the Japanese and Korean communities have established self-supporting Saturday schools to meet the special educational needs of their children.

Members of the Chinese community voiced the greatest need for day care centers. Like most other Asian families, Chinese households with children usually have both parents working. Because the Chinese in Chinatown are highly concentrated, their need is more evident and, therefore, should be easier to address. However, it was reported at the workshop that there are only four day care centers in Chinatown and they do not meet the need in that area.

The problem of school dropouts was related to language deficiency, according to David Eng, who spoke about the Chinese youth gang members. They cannot find employment and therefore roam the streets, because of their inability to speak the language. They then become easy prey to recruiters who threaten and coerce them to join a particular gang.

In the Pilipino community, the "dropout" problem refers to the low college enrollment of Pilipino youth. Federico Macaranas, a Pilipino economist, expressed serious concern that college-age Pilipino youth are not going on to college after graduation from high school. He said that the average enrollment rates for the total population in this age group (18–24 years old) are 37 percent for males and 27 percent for females. For Pilipinos, the enrollment rates are 28 percent for males and 23 percent for females, according to the 1970 census. He found this to be particularly alarming because in 1970, the median years of schooling was found to be higher for Pilipinos than for the total population in the 25 and above age bracket. Because income is related to education, there was concern that if the trend continues, many Pilipinos in the next generation may not be able to escape from the low-income levels of their parents.

The consensus of the participants was that, both individually and as a group, Asian Americans are continuously being left out of educational opportunities. They are not considered "minority" by college admissions officers and by private foundations and are seldom informed of various opportunities for educational grants. Some conferees believed that government funding agencies do not reach out to Asian American communities due, in part, to misleading family income statistics that conceal low per capita incomes, multiple wage earners in each family unit, and the number of hours worked per week.

TABLE 4.3

U.S. Population of Persons Age 19 and under, by Race or Ethnic Origin, 1960 and 1970

Population 19yrs old and under	1960 Number	1960 Percent of total	1970 Number	1970 Percent of total
Total	69,005,416	100.0	76,970,400	100.0
White	59,697,648	86.5	65,516,757	85.1
Black	8,582,961	12.4	10,410,636	13.5
Spanish origin	N.A.		4,539,612	5.9
Chinese	89,694	0.13	159,602	0.21
Japanese	179,395	0.26	188,991	0.25
Korean	N.A.		26,424	0.03
Pilipino	72,615	0.11	129,862	0.17
Percent increase 1960–1970				
Total Population	11.5			
White	9.7			
Black	21.3			
Spanish origin	N.A.			
Chinese	77.9			
Japanese	5.4			
Korean	N.A.			
Pilipino	78.8			

N.A. = not available
Source: U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

TABLE 4.4

National Arrests Data by Race, 1965, 1970, and 1975 (persons under 18 years of age)

	1965 Total	1965 Percent	1970 Total	1970 Percent	1975 Total	1975 Percent	Percent Increase 1965–70	1970–75	1965–75
White	733,585	71.97	1,089,484	72.88	1,594,941	76.24	+48.52	+39.05	+106.51
Black	263,690	25.87	370,594	24.82	433,820	21.83	+40.54	+17.06	+ 64.52
Am. Indian	7,585	0.74	13,624	0.91	17,099	0.86	+79.62	+25.51	+125.43
Chinese	440	0.04	714	0.05	1,078	0.05	+62.27	+50.98	+145.00
Japanese	1,059	0.10	1,561	0.10	1,497	0.08	+47.40	− 4.10	+ 41.36
All Others	12,942	1.27	16,880	1.13	18,693	0.94	+30.43	+10.74	+ 44.44
Total	1,019,301	99.99	1,492,857	99.99	1,987,128	100.0	+46.46	+33.11	+ 94.95

NOTE: Percent colums may not total 100 due to rounding.

Source: U.S., Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States, Uniform Crime Reports*, 1965, 1970, and 1975; and U.S., Commission on Civil Rights, preliminary draft of the report of the national project on Asian and Pacific Island Americans (December 1977).

Youth Programs and Employment

Workshop participants believed that Asian Americans do not receive their fair share of funds earmarked for youth services. Of all the Asian communities, only New York's Chinatown has youth programs, but these programs are inadequate to meet the many serious problems. Because there are no programs for Asian youth outside of Chinatown, many conference participants fear that problems now found in Chinatown will spread to other Asian communities. Rumblings have already been felt about isolated incidents of crime, delinquency, and gang activities that have been reported occasionally in the newspapers. Violence related to gang rivalry has occurred both within and between Asian ethnic groups.

Participants were informed that affirmative action programs seldom extend to the Asian American community and that the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) programs benefit only Chinatown. As a result of these and other factors, many Asian American youths are unemployed. Needed youth programs include bilingual-bicultural education and English as a second language, job training, job placement, and organized recreational programs. The need for Asian youth centers, centrally located and adequately staffed to serve all the Asian subgroups in order to facilitate the operation of the above programs, was also expressed.

Gangs and Violence

There has been a dramatic increase in the number of Asian American youths since 1960. Between 1960 and 1970 the number of Chinese under 20 grew by 77.9 percent, the number of Japanese by 5.4 percent, and the number of Pilipinos by 78.8 percent. (See table 4.3.) This increase in the number of Asian American youth has been accompanied by a corresponding rise in the crime rate, most notably in the Chinese population. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) crime reports, which identified only the Chinese and the Japanese among all Asian groups, show that nationwide from 1965 to 1975 the Chinese had the fastest growing crime rate (145.0 percent) of all racial and ethnic groups. (See table 4.4.) A study by Dr. Walter B. Miller, funded by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) and entitled, *Violence by Youth Groups in Major American Cities,* noted the following findings: In 1975 Asian American youth made up 3 percent of the total gang membership in Chicago, 20 percent in Los Angeles, 90 percent in San Francisco, and 5 percent in New York City. The 5 percent in New York City is equivalent to 1,450 youths, which is a sizable proportion of New York City's Asian American youth population.

A workshop participant said that two local precincts covering areas that include Chinatown reported an average increase of 26.7 percent in criminal arrests in the past 2 years and a 600 percent increase of violations in Chinatown alone.

Participants were convinced that the gang problem has reached crisis proportions in Chinatown and was threatening to become a problem in other Asian communities. They, therefore, resolved to step up efforts to seek funding for youth programs and to organize a pan-Asian youth group that will involve them in various constructive activities.

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REGISTER
LIQUOR

Chapter 5

Voter Participation

Asian Americans are a minority among minorities, seldom seen or heard, and rarely do policymakers, both in the public and private sectors, pay attention to them. There is an image of Asian Americans as well-educated, well-employed, and well-behaved people presenting no problem to society because they suffer silently and take care of their own. Activist Asian Americans are quick to disprove this stereotype by pointing to the large number of uneducated and poverty-level individuals in their communities.

The planning committee of the Asian American conference determined that voter participation would be an important item on the agenda. Members of the committee realized that whatever recommendations they made to public officials would be fruitless without effective political participation behind them. Goals established for the workshop were to help Asian Americans develop ways to consolidate their voting strength and to obtain political power.

Workshop participants charged that Asian Americans are not consulted in the formulation of policies that affect their lives. They are deprived of many benefits available to the general population, even those designed especially for minorities. Asian Americans are also more aware of their rights now and are more committed to securing those rights.

The Asian Americans in New York see the subtle discrimination that touches every aspect of their lives as a byproduct of their lack of political power. Workshop participants charged that there is no place for them in the regular Democratic or Republican party machinery. With the awakening of their political consciousness, the Asian Americans in New York City are now determined to start to make a place for themselves in the political scene.

Charles Wang, managing director of the Chinatown Planning Council and a member of the New York State Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, served as moderator of the voter participation workshop.

Voter Registration

Tim Magistrado, president of the Philippine Democratic Club, presented issues on voter registration. He noted that voter registration campaigns are generally directed towards the majority population. When voter registration is aimed at an immigrant population, the work becomes more difficult because the people do not believe that they are part of the system, that it is their right to participate in the electoral process, and that it is beneficial for them to do so. New voters are particularly vulnerable because they are required to show proof of their citizenship and their naturalization papers are not always available when they register.

In the past, outreach to special segments of the population has been aimed at blacks and, more recently, Hispanic groups. Except for the Chinese in Chinatown, little, if any, outreach to other Asian groups in the city has taken place. Mr. Magistrado added that in the presidential election of 1976 the Pilipinos in New York City, for the first time, received some funding to organize a citywide voter registration drive for their community. However, the financial assistance was received 1 month before

the registration deadline and did not adequately cover all the expenses.

Conducting a voter registration campaign is not simple even when the target is the population at large. Organizers must have registration information and eligibility requirements. Strategies have to be developed for publicity, timing, location of meetings, and approaches to be used in motivating potential voters to register.

For the Asian American community, voter registration is a much more involved process. When Asian immigrants become citizens, the names of the new citizens are not made available to voter registration groups. Congressional legislators, however, are notified of persons residing in their districts who became citizens so that they may write congratulatory letters to their new constituents. This inability to identify new voters greatly impedes voter registration efforts and often results in a great deal of wasted time, money, and energy. Voter registration groups are also required to prepare bilingual materials in several Asian languages, to campaign to educate potential voters on pertinent issues, and then to motivate them to register.

Voter Education

Participants agreed that by and large Asian Americans in New York have been indifferent to the political system because they have never been a part of it. They are scattered all over the city and, except for Chinatown, the politicians have never wooed them for their votes. Outreach has not been conducted in Asian American communities. Efforts to provide information on relevant issues have not taken place.

Some voter education materials in Chinese do exist, but not nearly enough bilingual resources are available to facilitate full political participation by this particular Asian group. Further, workshop participants were critical because campaign materials in Chinatown used the Chinese names of candidates for office, while voting machines print only the American names of the candidates. Because these American names are not recognized by the Chinese voters, many of them cannot vote for the candidates of their choice.

According to Beverly C. Jung, president of the New York chapter of the Organization of Chinese Americans, another problem is the use of voting machines that seem to intimidate those who are use to less complicated balloting methods. Instructions given just prior to entering the voting booths are often inadequate. During past elections, many votes were not cast because people did not understand how the machine worked. Ms. Jung expressed the need for the New York City Board of Elections to make voting machines available to communities for instructional purposes prior to an election.

Redistricting

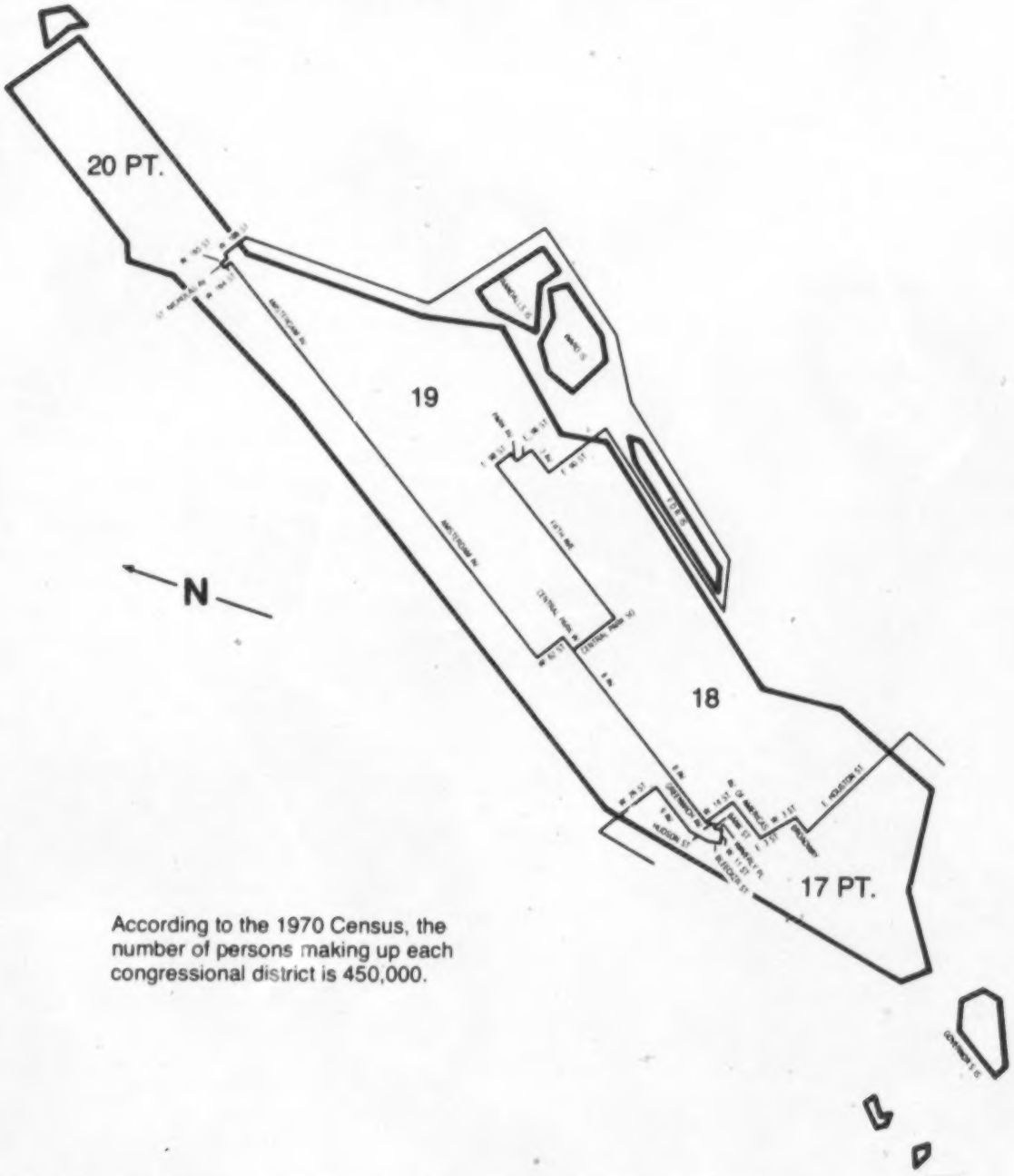
Virginia M. Kee of the Asian American Women's Caucus and Chia Ling Kuo of the Chinatown Planning Council spoke on the subject of "Asian Population Distribution and the Possibilities for Redistricting." According to them, there are enough Asian Americans in New York City to play a significant role in local politics. However, because of their dispersion and the way election districts are delineated, this has not been possible. Even Chinatown, which has the largest concentration of Asian Americans, is not able to attain its political potential because of the configuration of the various election districts. On the congressional and State assembly level, Chinatown is part of the district that covers Staten Island. The socioeconomic characteristics of the population of Chinatown and Staten Island are vastly different, the latter being predominantly white and middle income. Some members of the Chinese community believed that being included with Staten Island worked to their disadvantage. (See exhibits 5.1 and 5.2.)

On the State senatorial level, part of Chinatown is again included with Staten Island and another part east of Park Row belongs to district 25 in Brooklyn. Such a division serves to dilute the voting power of the Chinatown community. (See exhibit 5.3.)

The workshop participants were informed that the decennial census is mandated by law for the purpose of congressional reapportionment. After the 1980 census, the redrawing of election district lines will be assured, even below the congressional level. The Asian American participants were urged to petition for the creation of district lines that will make use of the full potential of the Asian vote. Mentioned in the discussion was that certain areas in Queens, such as Flushing and Elmhurst, also have high concentrations of Asian Americans. (See table 1.3.)

EXHIBIT 5.1

Manhattan Congressional Districts

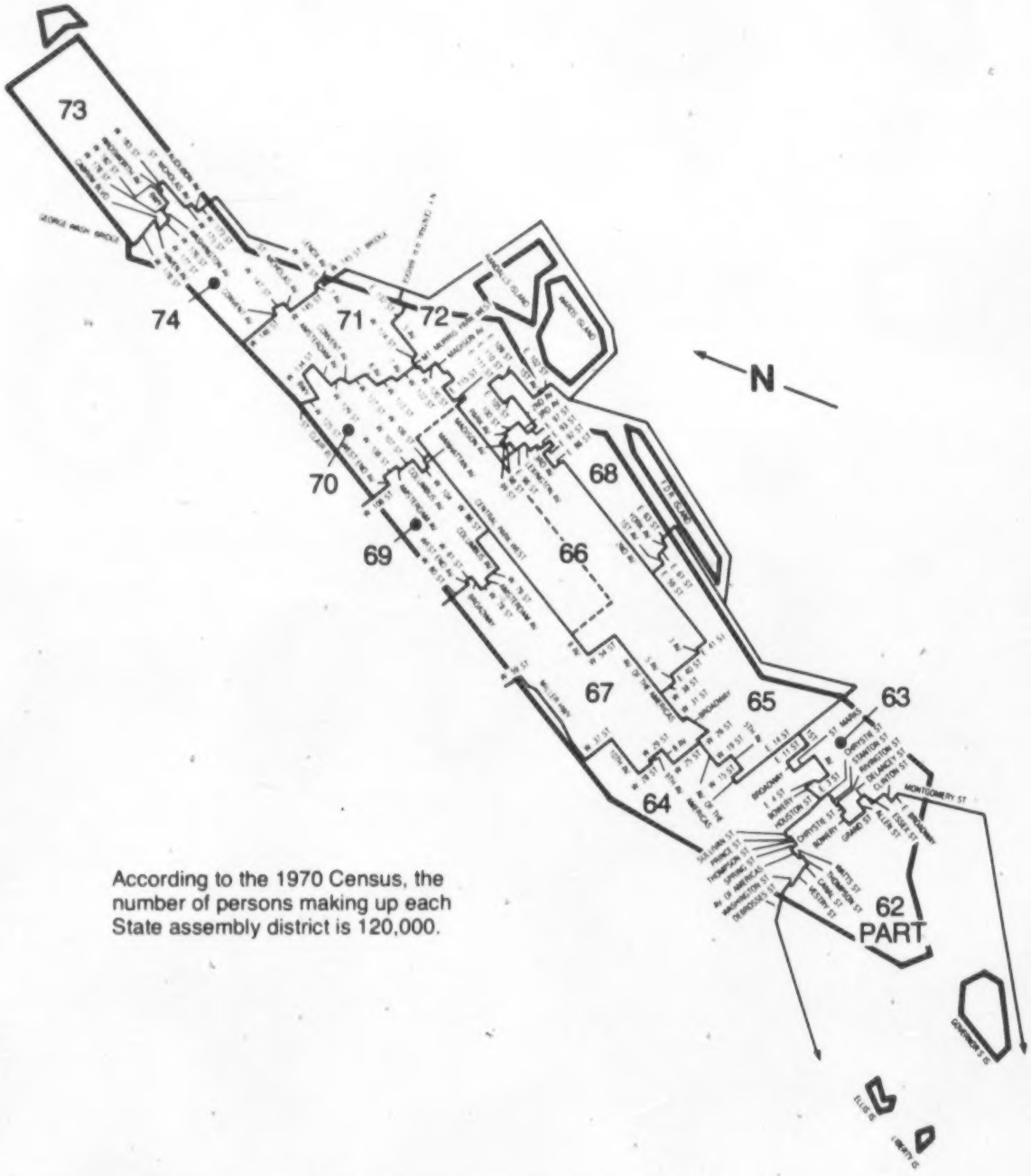


According to the 1970 Census, the number of persons making up each congressional district is 450,000.

Source: League of Women Voters of the City of New York, *They Represent You* (1979), p. 12.

EXHIBIT 5.2

Manhattan State Assembly Districts

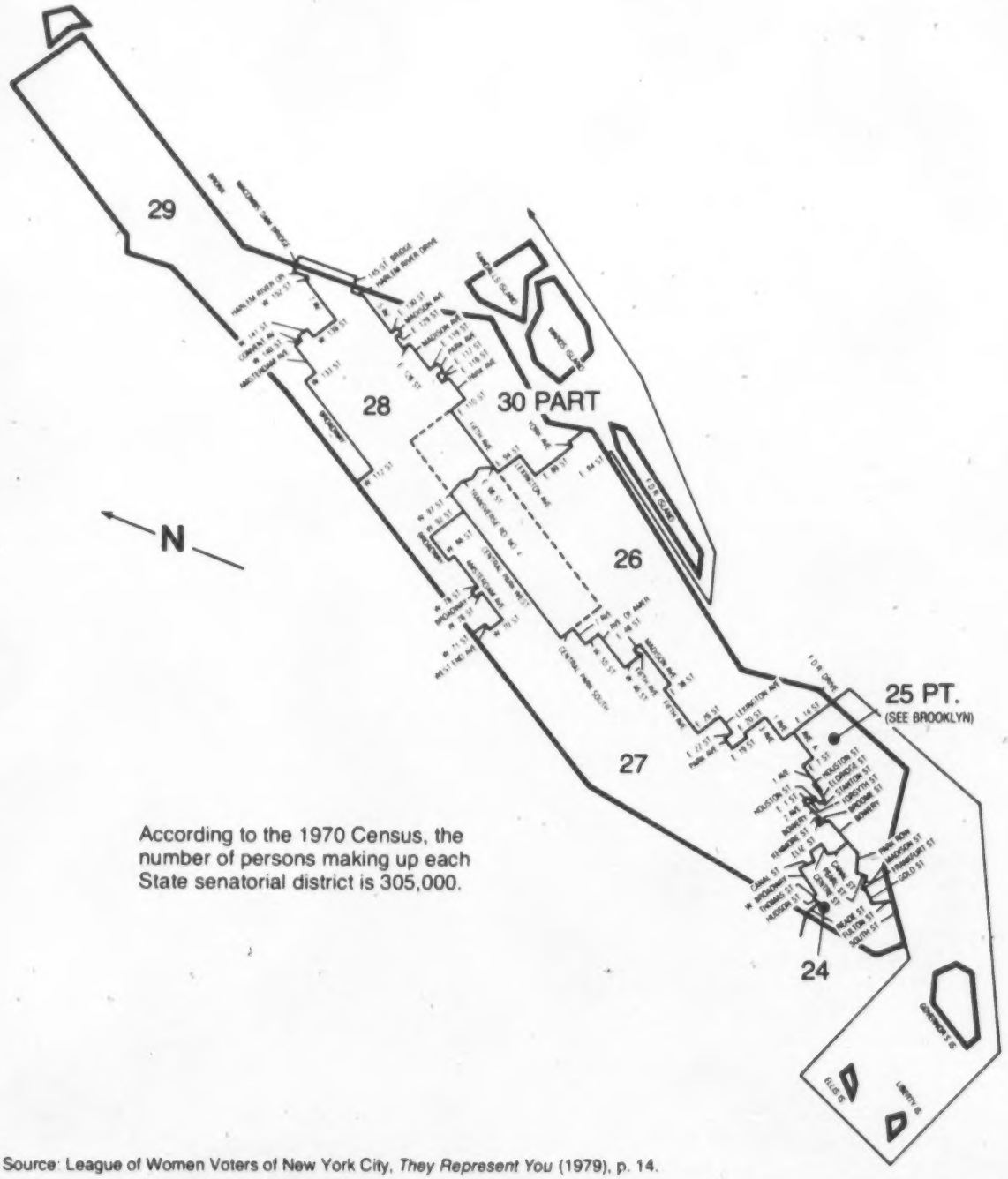


According to the 1970 Census, the number of persons making up each State assembly district is 120,000.

Source: League of Women Voters of the City of New York, *They Represent You* (1979), p. 15.

EXHIBIT 5.3

Manhattan State Senatorial Districts



Source: League of Women Voters of New York City, *They Represent You* (1979), p. 14.

TABLE 5.1

Asian Languages Covered in the Minority Language Provisions of the Voting Rights Act, March 1976

State/County	Language minority group
California	
San Francisco	Chinese
Hawaii	
Hawaii	Japanese, Pilipino
Kauai	Japanese, Pilipino
Maui	Japanese, Pilipino

Note: Jurisdictions in this category are subject only to the minority language provisions of the Voting Rights Act. They must conduct their elections in the language(s) appropriate for the listed language minority group(s).

Source: U.S., Commisison on Civil Rights, *Using the Voting Rights Act* (April 1976) Clearinghouse Publication no. 53.

TABLE 5.2

Asian Languages Included in the Combined Coverage Under the Voting Rights Act, as of March 1976

State/County	Language minority group
Hawaii	
Honolulu	Chinese, Pilipino

Note: Jurisdictions in this category are subject to all the special provisions of the Voting Rights Act. These jurisdictions may be designated for Federal examiners and observers, must submit changes in electoral laws and practices for Federal clearance, and must conduct their elections in the language(s) appropriate for the listed language minority group(s).

Source: U.S., Commission on Civil Rights, *Using the Voting Rights Act*, (April 1976) Clearinghouse Publication no. 53.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was amended in 1975 to strengthen the rights of citizens with limited English ability.[1] The act stipulates that on a county level, in order to qualify, 5 percent of the voters must belong to a single language minority group and that the illiteracy rate of such persons, as a group, must be higher than the national illiteracy rate. If a county meets the requirements, then authorities must provide registration materials, signs, and instructions in the minority language(s), both during registration and at election time. Voter registration officials and election workers who speak the minority language(s) must also be provided.

The amended Voting Rights Act has benefited the Chinese in San Francisco, California, and the Pilipinos, Chinese, and Japanese in Hawaii, but no other Asian language group elsewhere in the country. (See tables 5.1 and 5.2.) Deborah Snow of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights' national office described the way the State of California, at the urging of its minority communities, proceeded to overcome the limitations of the Voting Rights Act. In California, the limits were brought down to the precinct level (as opposed to county level in the act) and to 3 percent language minority (versus 5 percent as required by the act). In California, therefore, provisions of the Voting Rights Act take effect wherever there is at least 3 percent of a language minority group at the precinct level.

In 1970 there were 27,298 Chinese 18 years or over, 5,325 Japanese, and 3,544 Pilipinos in New York. (See table 5.3.) Many participants believed that many of these Asian Americans need the assistance provided under the Voting Rights Act. The workshop participants recommended that the State of New York make the same provisions as California and also that the conveners of the conference make the Federal Government aware of the deficiencies of the Voting Rights Act with respect to certain minorities.

Professor Jae T. Kim of the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, another panelist, spoke of the need for more Asian Americans in politically appointed

[1] 42 U.S.C. §1973aa-1a (Supp. 1976).

TABLE 5.3

Political Subdivisions in New York City with 400 or More Citizens of Voting Age in Any Language Minority with Percent Illiterate, 1970

Political subdivision	Citizens 18 years old and Over in Language Minority: Total	Language Minority	Number	Percent of total	Language minority completing less than 5 years of school
Bronx	956,987	American Indian	1,035	0.1	1.4
		Chinese	2,060	0.2	7.5
		Japanese	463	0.1	0.1
		Spanish	178,107	18.6	16.3
Brooklyn	1,673,888	American Indian	1,691	0.1	4.6
		Chinese	4,583	0.3	16.0
		Pilipino	1,267	0.1	10.4
		Japanese	935	0.1	7.1
		Spanish	140,222	8.4	19.0
Manhattan	1,101,889	American Indian	1,667	0.2	3.5
		Chinese	15,762	1.4	22.2
		Pilipino	1,173	0.1	9.3
		Japanese	2,392	0.2	4.2
		Spanish	111,938	10.2	18.9
Queens	1,347,705	American Indian	1,126	0.1	4.6
		Chinese	4,893	0.4	10.0
		Pilipino	1,104	0.1	6.4
		Japanese	1,535	0.1	3.8
		Spanish	21,926	1.6	7.5
Staten Island	187,371	Spanish	2,623	1.4	13.6

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Report, Series P-25, No. 627, "Language Minority, Illiteracy and Voting Data Used in Making Determinations for the Voting Rights Act Amendment of 1975," table 3.

positions in State and city governments. He read aloud membership lists of selected boards and commissions and called attention to the glaring lack of Asian American representation on these bodies.

The participants of the voter participation workshop also recommended the establishment of an office of Asian American affairs in the White House, in the Governor's office, and in the New York City Mayor's office and that the Governor and the Mayor of New York City appoint Asian Americans to commissions and advisory boards. Following Ms. Mink's advice in her keynote address, the participants also recommended setting up a talent bank of qualified candidates' names to be recommended for commission and advisory board appointments.

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funds NOW
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MORE
BILINGUAL

Chapter 6

Summary and Recommendations

The conference, "Asian Americans: An Agenda for Action," was sponsored by the New York State Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights under its authority to monitor developments in civil rights and to serve as a national clearinghouse for civil rights information. The 1978 conference was called to assess the effectiveness of the Advisory Committee's 1974 informal public hearing on Asian Americans' civil rights concerns and to gauge how much, if any, advancement had been made in their effort to attain equal opportunity. The public forum was provided to allow the Asian American community the opportunity to discuss collectively issues of critical concern and, just as importantly, to permit that community to develop collectively strategies for future action.

At the end of the daylong meeting, conference participants approved a series of recommendations to Federal, State, and local authorities and other organizations to help remedy the inequalities discussed in the workshops. The Advisory Committee did not investigate the specific conclusions reached at the conference, and the following findings and recommendations should not be attributed, either in whole or in part, to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights or to the New York State Advisory Committee. However, the Advisory Committee found that the conferees' findings and recommendations were consistent with the evidence presented in its earlier study in 1974 and that several of the findings, such as that on the inadequacy of data on Asian American groups, were substantiated in its report. Furthermore, the Advisory Committee concluded that the recommendations were an integral part of the conference and ought to be presented to the public as part of the Commission's clearinghouse function.

It is the Advisory Committee's expectation that these recommendations will be considered seriously by the Commission when formulating its recommendations to the President and the Congress.

Asian Americans in New York City

According to conference participants, 4 years after the informal public hearing, "Equal Opportunity for Asian Americans in the New York Metropolitan Area," Asian Americans in New York are still far from their goal of achieving equal opportunity. The Asian Americans at the conference spoke of the continuing discrimination and disparate treatment they have received from both public and private organizations. They voiced extreme dissatisfaction with their lack of participation in social service programs and with their lack of representation on boards and commissions that impact on policies and programs affecting Asian Americans. The conferees stated that a communication gap due to cultural, economic, and linguistic barriers has adversely affected their civil rights and that the lack of sufficient data on Asian Americans has precluded them from adequately addressing their problems.

Recommendation No. 1: An office of Asian American affairs should be established in the White House, in the State Governor's office, and in the office of the New York City Mayor to serve as liaison between the government and the Asian American communities. These offices would review legislation, public policy, and programs for their relevance to the

Asian American populations and work to ensure the full participation of Asian Americans in social and economic development programs of the different levels of government. Special emphasis should be given to the improvement of data collection for all Asian American subgroups.

Recommendation No. 2: The President of the United States, the Governor of the State of New York, and the Mayor of New York City should appoint Asian Americans to boards and commissions to recognize their past and present achievements, to be aware of their potential for further contributions to society, and to provide an Asian American perspective to policymaking, especially on those issues particularly relevant to Asian Americans.

Recommendation No. 3: The 1978 conference planning committee and other appropriate groups should establish a talent bank of qualified Asian Americans from all over the country who may be recommended for possible positions on advisory boards and commissions as well as for appointment to the staff of various agencies and departments on the local, State, or national level.

Recommendation No. 4: The conveners of the conference should write to the Governor of New York, the Mayor of New York City, and other governmental officials who were invited but failed to attend or send representatives to the conference and express the deep concern felt by the leadership of the Asian American communities at this apparent lack of interest.

The Elderly

According to the conferees, the problems of the Asian American elderly are the same as those faced by all elderly people, but past discriminatory immigration laws have aggravated the problem for Asian Americans. Immigration laws restricted, and at times denied, entry to Asian women. Asian men who were recruited for cheap labor were therefore largely prevented from having families and now live alone and are lonely. Because of the nature of their early occupations, many Asian American elderly live on limited incomes. For myriad reasons, many of them do not take advantage of social security, supplemental security income, or any other form of public assistance. Many attempts by Asian American groups to seek funding for programs to benefit their elderly population have been unsuccessful because little research on the Asian American elderly has been done and available statistics are often not sufficient to meet the requirements of funding agencies. The conferees charged that the rights of Asian American elderly have been unduly restricted, not only by cultural and linguistic barriers, but more important, by the lack of sensitivity and outreach by agencies dealing with the aging.

Recommendation No. 1: Federal, State, and city offices of aging, as well as private foundations, should initiate or otherwise promote and conduct more comprehensive research on the problems of the elderly in each of the major Asian American subgroups. Where possible, government agencies should contract directly with Asian American groups in order to ensure better communication with, and greater sensitivity to, the target populations. The conferees recommended that the results of such research should be made available to the service agencies and Asian American groups working with the elderly populations.

Recommendation No. 2: State, city, and private agencies that work with the elderly should provide more information to the Asian American elderly regarding available programs and services. They should reach out to the Asian American communities by publishing bilingual materials, where necessary; by hiring Asian Americans on their staffs; and by providing outreach and other facilities in Asian American communities outside of Chinatown, such as in midtown or the upper West Side in Manhattan, in certain areas of Queens, such as Flushing and Elmhurst, as well as in South Brooklyn.

Recommendation No. 3: Private social service agencies, such as the National Protestant Council of Churches and Catholic Charities, should establish a national coordinating board to serve as a clearinghouse and to help plan program priorities for the elderly. The board's membership should have representation from community organizations and elderly individuals from different racial and ethnic groups, including the various Asian American subgroups.

Recommendation No. 4: The 1978 conference planning committee should explore the various public and private funding sources for the purpose of establishing multipurpose centers for Japanese, Korean, Indian, Pilipino, and Chinese elderly living outside of Chinatown. Such centers should offer cultural and recreational programs, furnish information and referral service, and provide counseling to the elderly.

Recommendation No. 5: Federal, State, and city housing agencies should meet with representatives

of Asian American organizations and provide them with information and technical assistance needed to develop housing proposals for their elderly. Since housing remains a critical issue for the Asian American elderly, the Asian American communities should be afforded the opportunity to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to take full advantage of existing housing program provided under the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974.

Employment

Conference participants charged that Asian Americans in many instances are denied equal access to employment opportunities and, further, that the extent of this discrimination has not been adequately documented or made public. The conferees also underlined the hardships experienced by noncitizen Asians in the health care system in terms of obtaining visas, meeting licensing requirements, or receiving adequate specialized training. They alleged that the licensing procedures seem to discriminate against foreign-trained candidates. In addition, the conferees found that job training and placement opportunities for these Asian groups in New York are grossly inadequate. This condition is further exacerbated by the lack of Asian American staffing in New York City's manpower centers.

Recommendation No. 1: Federal enforcement agencies, including the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs, the New York State Division of Human Rights, and the New York City Commission on Human Rights should initiate studies in specific industries with large numbers of Asian employees to determine whether there is a pattern and practice of discrimination against them. If such discrimination is found to exist, the appropriate agencies and organizations should undertake class action suits, initiate out-of-court negotiations with the larger employers, and take other steps to assure corrective action.

Recommendation No. 2: Asian American groups, particularly those concerned with employment, should conduct research and initiate other studies of discrimination against the various Asian subgroups. Through seminars and other community education activities, these groups should increase the awareness among Asians of systemic discrimination and barriers to equal employment opportunity in American society and provide information on complaint procedures and remedies under Federal, State, and local laws.

Recommendation No. 3: New York City Department of Employment manpower centers located in communities with large Asian American populations, particularly in the lower East Side and upper West Side of Manhattan and in Elmhurst and Flushing in Queens, should receive additional staff and funds to better meet the needs of the growing Asian American populations. Wherever possible, steps should be taken to hire Asian Americans at those centers in an effort to reduce the linguistic and cultural barriers facing Asians living in New York City.

Recommendation No. 4: State and local governments, together or under the aegis of private organizations such as the Rockefeller Foundation, should provide training to Asian and other foreign-trained medical personnel to help them pass the appropriate examinations. Training should include assistance with the language used in the examination, information on the cultural variations of the profession in the United States, and advice on the examination procedures. The programs should also offer job counseling, including a discussion of systemic discrimination against minorities in the United States; information on equal employment opportunity and complaint procedures; and other remedies to combat discrimination. Funding should be obtained from the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW).

Recommendation No. 5: The New York State Civil Service Commission should validate the performance relevance of the New York State licensing examination for nurses. Particular attention should be given to possible cultural bias in the language used, especially in multiple choice questions. Wherever possible, alternative licensing procedures should be established.

Recommendation 6: The 12-month internship requirement for foreign-trained pharmacists should be reduced to 6 months, the time required for U.S.-trained pharmacists. This will lessen the undue hardship for foreign-trained pharmacists and help to equalize their opportunity for entering the profession.

Youth

Asian American community leaders at the conference found an alarming lack of attention given to the problems of Asian American youth by Federal, State, and local authorities. They criticized the

governments for failing to provide adequate educational, recreational, and vocational services to these youth. They cited the growing problems of Chinese youth gangs that now threaten to spread to other Asian youth groups. However, they stressed that there are many Asian American youth who are not involved in gangs and who urgently need services now. These services include the provision of bilingual-bicultural education or English as a second language, job training, vocational counseling and job placement, and an organized recreational program. However, the Asian American leaders stated that the paucity of adequate data to document the needs of Asian American youth and the little importance given to available information have impeded the planning and development of program priorities to meet their needs and to obtain adequate funding.

Recommendation No. 1: Federal, State, and local governments should give top priority to funding proposals dealing with Asian American youth. The rapidly increasing number of Asian youth includes many recent arrivals with a limited English-speaking ability who are not acculturated to American life. The resulting alienation frequently serves as a breeding ground for delinquency.

Recommendation No. 2: The appropriate agencies on all levels of government should improve and expand their data collection and, if possible, conduct pilot studies to determine youth needs in the Asian American communities, because service delivery to Asian American youth depends, to a large extent, on the existence and availability of adequate data.

Recommendation No. 3: In conjunction with Asian subgroups, New York City should establish multipurpose youth centers in communities with large numbers of Asian American youth. These centers should provide a wide variety of programs, including vocational training, recreation, remedial, and other educational services and programs to reduce cultural isolation and juvenile delinquency. Funds should be obtained from a wide variety of sources, including the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW), as well as New York City and New York State.

Recommendation No. 4: State and city agencies located in areas that serve Asian youth should create occupational and vocational counseling programs to assist them in choosing and training for productive careers. As a first step in this process, the New York City Board of Education should implement a school-based, outreach program emanating from schools such as Seward Park High School, Forest Hills High School, Flushing High School, and Murry Bergtraum High School. These outreach programs should have a full-time staff at each site to offer continuing education, counseling, and recreational activities for Asian youth.

Recommendation No. 5: Private industry, including banks and large corporations, should provide more training programs for minorities and recruit actively in Chinatown and in other Asian American communities.

Recommendation No. 6: Youth from the different Asian American subgroups should organize a pan-Asian youth association that will promote harmony, understanding, and cooperation among the different youth groups and channel their energies towards constructive endeavors such as cultural activities and sports competitions. HEW and CETA funding should be made available for such activities. In addition, private and public funding institutions should reach out to the Asian American youth with technical and financial assistance in all pan-Asian American endeavors.

Recommendation No. 7: The Federal military academies for the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard should hold annual job fairs in communities with large Asian American populations to provide information to Asian American youth on their programs.

Voter Participation

Asian American leaders participating in the conference expressed strong dissatisfaction with their current status in the political scene. Members of the voter participation workshop charged that the political system did not give equal opportunity for Asian Americans to participate fully in the electoral process and did not recognize, or failed to utilize, the full potential of the Asian American vote. Asian Americans are faced with unique hardships not encountered by other minorities in conducting voter registration drives and motivating eligible voters to go to the polls. The strength of the Asian American vote is weakened in instances where the boundaries of election districts cut across areas with concentrations of Asian Americans. The Voting Rights Act of 1965, the purpose of which is to strengthen the opportunities for limited English-speaking persons to exercise their right of suffrage, has very limited application for Asian Americans, because the juris-

dictions specified in the special provisions of the 1970 amendment are not small enough to reach the Asian American populations. Asian Americans, who would like to have greater political strength, are underrepresented in the machinery of the major political parties at the national, State, and local levels.

Recommendation No. 1: Asian American leaders should call for the creation of a federation of Asian American voters as a first step in establishing a political organization to influence the structures, procedures, and activities of all political parties; work for increased voter registration in Asian American communities; and support Asian American candidates for office at all levels of government.

Recommendation No. 2: Groups such as the New York City League of Women Voters should actively support the efforts of Asian Americans to increase their voting power by providing technical assistance, materials, and when possible, financial resources to enable them to organize politically. Agencies such as the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and the New York City Board of Elections should provide materials for public education and technical assistance, as appropriate.

Recommendation No. 3: The major political parties should adopt an aggressive affirmative action program, including outreach, to the Asian American communities in order to increase the number of registered Asian American voters on party lists; to increase the representation of Asian Americans on the national, State, and local levels of the party organizations; and to increase the number of Asian American candidates for office. This affirmative action program should be made public and should be reviewed on a regular basis.

Recommendation No. 4: The Voting Rights Act of 1965, as first amended in 1970, contains a deficiency for certain small, language minority groups, including Asian Americans. This deficiency should be communicated to the Federal Government. The coverage formula, as presently constituted, states that 5 percent of the citizens of voting age in a county must belong to a single language minority group. There are very few counties in the United States where a single Asian subgroup constitutes 5 percent of the population of voting age. Congress should therefore further amend the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to lower the coverage formula from 5 percent to 3 percent and set the jurisdiction level from a county to a precinct.

In addition, the New York State legislature and/or the New York City Board of Elections should be asked to provide voting machines with multilingual entries, as well as election notices and election workers in all precincts, rather than counties, where at least 3 percent of the citizens of voting age belong to a single language minority group.

Recommendation No. 5: The New York City Board of Elections should require that Asian American candidates be identified by their English name and their native language name on the voting machine or on the ballot during an election.

Appendix A

COOPERATING ORGANIZATIONS

Asian American Council of New York
Asian Americans for Action
Asian American Postal Employee Welfare and Recreation, Inc.
Asian Americans for Equality
Asian American Women's Caucus
Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund
Asian Children's Underground
Asian American Students Association of Princeton
Asian Cine—Vision, Inc.
Association of Chinese Teachers
Bharathi Society of Amer[illegible], Inc.
Chinatown Bridge Community Project in Education
Chinese Mission Services
Chinese Scholars Service Corps, Inc.
Chinese United Methodist Church
China Broadcasting
Chinese American Cultural Institute
Chinatown Planning Council
Chinatown Service Center, Inc.
Filipino Social Club of New York
Frusato Educational Services, Inc.
Hamilton Madison Senior Center
Japanese American Association of New York, Inc.
Japanese American Citizens League
Japanese American Help for the Aging (JAHFA)
Japanese American United Church
Korean Association of New York
Korean-American Community Institute
Korean American Federation
Korean Cultural Council
Korean School of New York
Korean Central Church of New York
Korean Community Services, Inc.
Federation of Indian Associations
Long Island Chinese Circle, Inc.
Organization of Chinese Americans (national)
Organization of Chinese Americans (New York chapter)
Organization of Chinese American Women
Pacific Asian Coalition (mid-Atlantic region)
Philippine Americans for Community Action and Development
Philippine American Youth Organization
Philippine Executive Council of the Atlantic Seaboard
Philippine Forum of New York
Sikh Cultural Society
Transfiguration Roman Catholic Church

Visha Hindu Parishad of America, Inc.
Wall Street Lions Club

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